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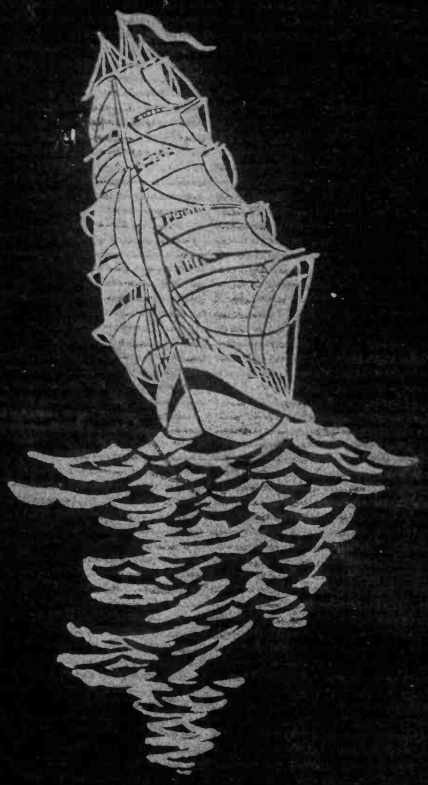

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SHIPS AND SHIPPING OF OLD NEW YORK

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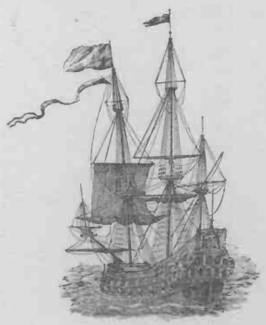
OF THE CIVIL WAR



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T.R. Oct. 13

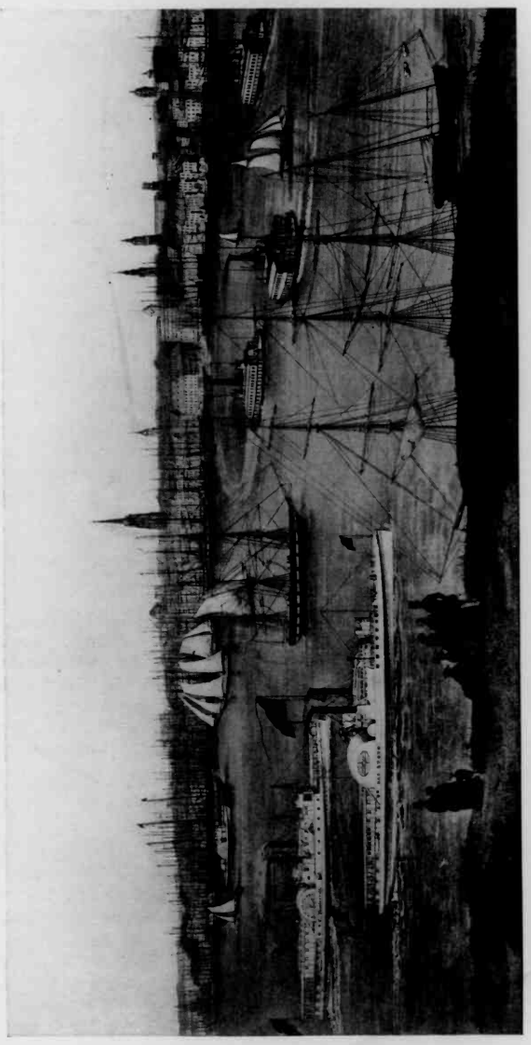
FOREWORD

IN presenting its second historical brochure, the Bank of the Manhattan Company directs attention to a subject always of interest to the city of New York. In the space at its command only a bird's-eye view can be given of the Ships and Shipping of Old New York from the days of the first Dutch traders to the end of that remarkable era of maritime development when the American clipper ships carried the bulk of the oversea trade and were the admiration of every port.

Prior to 1860 all the great fortunes of the country had come from the sea, and so, inevitably, from the earliest days and until the glory of the American merchant marine had passed away, ships and shipping were the most conspicuous feature of New York business life, and the water front was the centre of interest. The story of the adventurous sailors and merchants who built the city with wealth brought from the seven seas, together with a brief account of their vessels, is not without interest to the business man as well as to the student of history.

So far as can be learned, this pamphlet is the only connected account of the commerce of New York, and no pains have been spared to make it, so far as it goes, interesting and authoritative. It is illustrated with many rare prints, a number of which are here reproduced for the first time. They are available through the courtesy of Percy R. Pyne, 2d, John D. Crimmins, the New York Chamber of Commerce, J. Clarence Davies, Charles H. Taylor, Jr., Arthur T. Williams, Jr., Samuel Pray, Otto Wiecker, the Boston Marine Society, the New York Public Library, New York Historical Society, the Nantucket Public Library, and others who have facilitated the preparation of this book. A list of the authorities consulted in the preparation of this brochure will be found on the last page.

Because of the attention now given everywhere to the development of our merchant marine this brochure has a timeliness which, perhaps, will make it the more interesting. It is presented with the compliments of the Bank of the Manhattan Company, which hopes it may find a permanent place in your library.



VIEW OF NEW YORK.
FROM BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

Published by N. Currier, 152 Nassau Street, corner of Spruce, 1849, showing some of Cornelius Vanderbilt's Hudson River Steamboats and the shipping of New York of 1849. (Collection of Otto Wiecker.)

A rare print of New York from the N. Visscher map, originally printed in 1655.
(Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)

SHIPS AND SHIPPING OF OLD NEW YORK

NEW YORK owes its beginning to the trade enterprise of the Dutch. And the trading instinct early implanted by these keen and daring traders has given the city the character which has made it the commercial centre of the New World. Unlike the other colonies, founded for religious or political reasons, New York was created by trade and for trade, and has never questioned its destiny.

At the time the Dutch began colonizing the island of Manhattan their forty years' war for independence against Spain had drawn to a successful close, and they were the freest people in the world and unsurpassed in enterprise and intelligence. All nationalities and sects were, in theory at least, welcomed at Manhattan. By the year 1650 eighteen languages were there spoken, so that New Amsterdam, or early New York, was then as cosmopolitan as the New York of to-day. This broad-minded tolerance, which was the universal Hollandish custom, attracted from Europe bold adventurers bent upon making their fortune. In spite of the interruption of the change from Dutch to English rule, in spite of the constant warfare of the eighteenth century and the British occupation during the Revolution, New York's commerce grew steadily. By 1800, eleven years after the adoption of the Constitution and the consequent establishment of a stable government, New York had outstripped its rivals, Boston and Philadelphia, and had taken the foremost place as the seat of American commerce,—a position she has never relinquished.

The story of New York's trade begins in an era of daring voyages and strange perils, runs through years of romance and adventure, and reaches its culmination when the clipper ships of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia controlled the carrying trade of the world.

EARLIEST KNOWN VIEW OF NEW YORK.

Joost Hartgers' view of New Amsterdam, from a book printed in Amsterdam in 1651, containing a narrative or description of Virginia, New England, and the islands, by Joost Hartgers. (Collection of New York Public Library.)

Bartering for Fur

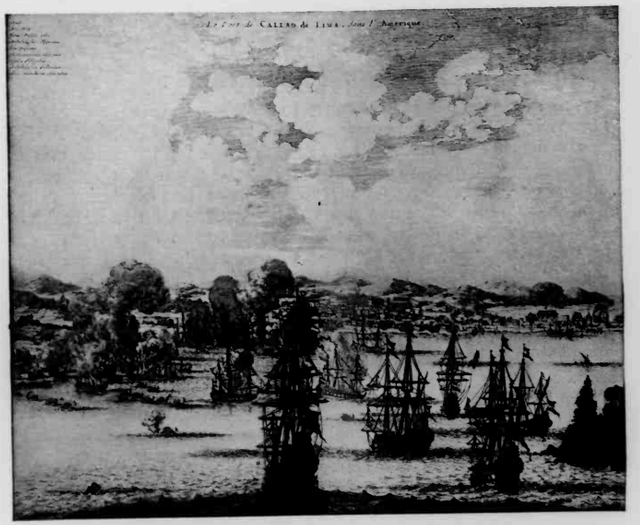
The shipping of New York began about 1610 with so insignificant a transaction as a barter for fur—probably a beaver skin—between an adventurous Dutchman and an inquisitive Indian. Small though the transaction was, it was the root of a commerce that grew into a trade so flourishing that in 1914 it reached the enormous total of $1,795,567,321.

The consideration paid for furs by the Dutchmen probably was, at first, gaudy beads, brass buttons, jack-knives or like articles. Whatever may have been the consideration, it yielded the thrifty Hollanders a satisfactory profit in a day when only enormous profits were sought from the sea, and led to the slow but sure development of the maritime trade of the island of Manhattan.

Growth of the Fur Trade

The first report of the rich fur trade, that the Indians of Manhattan offered, reached the shrewd merchants of Holland with the news of Henry Hudson's exploration of the river which he, in honor of Prince Maurice, named the Mauritius, but to which posterity has given the explorer's name. At the time Holland's main source of furs was Archangel. Thither the merchants of Amsterdam annually sent one hundred vessels. And, although the stockholders of the East India Company were much disappointed over Hudson's failure to find a short passage to the rich fur trade of India, the merchants of Holland were certainly pleased to learn of a place so productive of furs as New Amsterdam; and especially pleased were they that the valuable furs could be secured for the cheap baubles so greedily sought by the Indians.

The distinction of inaugurating the commerce of New York belongs



A RARE PRINT SHOWING A DUTCH SQUADRON ATTACKING SPANISH SHIPPING IN THE HARBOR OF CALLAO, PERU.

The Dutch vessels are in the foreground, and to the left are rowboats filled with armed men from the ships going to plunder the Spanish merchantmen already helpless and on fire. At the extreme left of the picture a landing party is meeting with resistance, and Spanish troops may be seen hastening from the interior to repel the attack, while the cannon of the fortress and naval arsenal are firing upon the Dutch. In the centre of the picture, behind the masts of the big ship in the foreground, is a blazing Dutch fire-ship being towed towards the ship of the lieutenant-governor of the city. On the right of the picture is the governor's palace. From *La Galerie Agréable*, by Pierre vander Aa. (Collection of J. Clarence Davies.)

to a former officer of the *Half Moon* who had served under Hudson. He was probably either Van Campen, a Dutchman, or Robert Jewett (as the Dutch said, Juet), of Limehouse, London. He commanded the first trading vessel that was despatched in 1610 from Holland to the Hudson for furs. Doubtless splendid furs were brought back and the profitable returns set other merchants on the venture, for more ships were promptly sent, two of which, Valentine says, bore the appropriate names of *The Little Fox* and *The Little Crane*. The first ships to trade with Manhattan came again and again, and the repeated voyages made by these vessels were highly profitable business ventures and resulted as well in notable discoveries.

New York's First Ship

In 1613, probably, the *Fortune*, commanded by Hendrick Christaensen, and the *Tiger*, by Adriaen Block, sailed to the Hudson, followed by three other Dutch vessels. While at anchor off Manhattan Island, Block lost his vessel by fire and spent the winter building a new ship. This he christened the *Onrust*, meaning the Restless, and she was the

first ship built in New Netherland and the second ship built by white men in America. She was 44½ feet long, 16 tons burden, rendered much service in exploring Long Island Sound, and is thought to have been the first European vessel to pass through Hell Gate, which in the Dutch form means either "entrance to Hell" or "clear passageway."

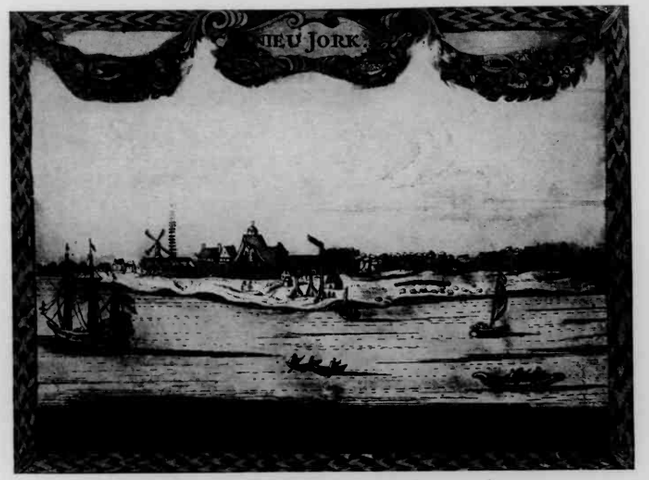
Beginnings of Commerce and Capturing Spanish Silver Ships

The year 1614 is a memorable one in the history of New York, for then the United Netherland Company received its charter and thus opened the duly chartered commerce of the Hudson River. According to Professor Henry Phelps Jackson here was the beginning of commercial New York. Traders' huts had been built on the Hudson for those who stayed to collect furs from the Indians while the fur-laden ships went to Amsterdam and came back again. But there was no permanent settlement at this time; for the life of the United Netherland Company, which enjoyed exclusive trading privileges here, was limited by charter to four voyages, all to be made in three years from January 1, 1615. Not until the Dutch West India Company came into existence in 1621 and received from the States-General its famous charter with enormous powers, including the exclusive privilege of trading in the province of New Netherland for twenty years, was a permanent settlement made. Manhattan Island was, however, of secondary consideration with the West India Company: war, in which profits were sought in the capture of Spanish silver ships, was the chief enterprise of the company. As a side issue and during truces, the company's vessels engaged in the fur trade and in the capture and sale of slaves. In 1623 the company sent over thirty Walloon families, some of whom settled on Manhattan Island, some in what is now a part of the borough of Brooklyn, and others at Fort Orange, now Albany.

Minuit arrives and buys New York for Sixty Guilders

Director Peter Minuit, representing the West India Company, arrived in 1626 with more settlers, and bought the title to the island of Manhattan from the Indians for 60 guilders, usually figured as equivalent to $24, but with a purchasing value of $120 of our money; the consideration, however, being paid in beads, ribbons, mirrors, hatchets, tools, etc. He then built Fort Amsterdam. The "Comptoir," or counting house, of the company occupied a stone building thatched with reeds, and round it were clustered about thirty houses made of bark and occupied by the settlers.

As the Dutch West India Company jealously held control of all trade, it was some years before the States-General forced it to open the fur and oversea trade to settlers. Despite the company's discouragement of individual initiative, trade flourished amazingly under Minuit's tactful rule; for the country, rich in timber and furs, was easily exploited through its many waterways and yielded rich returns. Each year Minuit sent to Holland larger and larger cargoes of furs, which the Dutch shallops brought to New Amsterdam from the Indian villages upon the thirteen rivers to which Sandy Hook was the inlet. Fleets of canoes penetrated the minor streams and brought furs to New Amsterdam from the interior of the continent. Trade was pushed as far east as Narragansett Bay.



NEW YORK ABOUT 1660.
From a map by Petrus Schenk. (Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)

Earliest Known Manifest from the Port of New York

The earliest known manifest of a vessel clearing from the port of New York is in a report made November 4, 1626, to the States-General of the arrival in Amsterdam of the ship *Arms of Amsterdam*, which sailed from New Netherland out of the river Mauritius on the 23d of September. Her cargo comprised 7,246 beaver skins, a mixed lot of about 1,000 skins,—otter, mink, wildcat, and muskrat,—and considerable oak timber and hickory. The value of the cargo was between $25,000 and $50,000 of our money. In 1628 the value of the fur exports from New Amsterdam was 61,000 guilders. In the year 1629–1630 the value of New Amsterdam exports had jumped to 130,000 guilders, and in 1632 the fur exports alone amounted to 130,000 guilders, in 1635 to 135,000 guilders. The returns from the fur trade, however, as compared with the treasure to be secured by capturing Spanish silver ships must have seemed paltry to the ambitious West India Company, for in 1628 Admiral Heyn's capture of seventeen Spanish galleons yielded no less than from 12,000,000 to 14,000,000 Dutch guilders.

The commercial importance of the settlement on Manhattan Island was early recognized, and steps were taken to secure it. By the charter of Liberties and Exemptions issued in 1629 to encourage immigration, staple rights were granted to the settlement, compelling all vessels trading on the river or on the coast to discharge their cargo at the fort or pay compensating port charges.

ADMIRAL HEYN'S CAPTURE OF THE SPANISH SILVER FLEET.

From a book entitled "The West India Triumph trumpet, sounded to God's honor and the glory of the Dutch, concerning the overthrow of the Spanish Silver Fleet from New Spain, in the Bay of Matanzas, by the ships of the authorized West India Company, under command of the Honorable Valiant Pieter Pieterszen Heyn, General; and of Heynrick Korneliszen Lonk, Admiral. Took place the 8th of September, 1628. By Samuel Ampzing, Minister of God's word near Haerlem. Printed at Haerlem by Andriaen Rooman, official City Book Printer, 1629." (Collection of New York Public Library.)

(*Inscription on the cut reads, "Conquest of the Spanish Silver Fleet off New Spain in the Bay of Matanzas."*)

Opening the Coastwise Trade

Trade with New England was opened as early as 1627, when the Dutch invited "friendly commercial relations" with the Pilgrims by sending the governor of the colony a "rundlet of sugar" and two Holland cheeses, and a letter offering to accommodate (give credit). At first the Pilgrims were not responsive because the Dutch were trading with the Indians in Connecticut, a region claimed by England; but in 1633 Governor Winthrop's vessel, the *Blessing of the Bay*, visited New Amsterdam and established relations so cordial that by 1635 New Amsterdam vessels were carrying tobacco and salt to Boston from the West Indies and Virginia, and Flanders mares, oxen, and sheep from Holland.

West India Ships

Foreign trade, at first the monopoly of the West India Company, afterwards fell into the hands of the merchants of Holland, who carried it on in vessels owned abroad. Among the trading vessels owned by the West India Company were the *New Netherland* of 260 tons, the *Arms of Amsterdam*, and the bark *Nassau*. The *New Netherland*, which brought the colonists in 1623, was built especially for the trade and made regular passages during the whole period of the Dutch possession. It is stated that one hundred years after her first voyage she came to New York still in good condition. The *Hope*, in command of "Schipper" Jurian Blanck, made her first voyage to New Amsterdam

in 1633, having been captured from the enemy the previous year. Other ships engaged in trade with Holland were the *Sea Mew*, which brought Minuit in 1626, the *Orange Tree*, the *Three Kings*, the *White Horse*, the *Great Christopher*, the *Black Eagle*, the *Pear Tree*, and the *King Solomon*, all owned in Holland. The voyage from Holland to New Amsterdam generally took seven or eight weeks, because Dutch captains, fearing the storms of the North Atlantic, after clearing the English Channel laid their course south for the Canary Islands, then to Guiana and the Caribbees, and northwest, between the Bermudas and the Bahamas, to the coast.

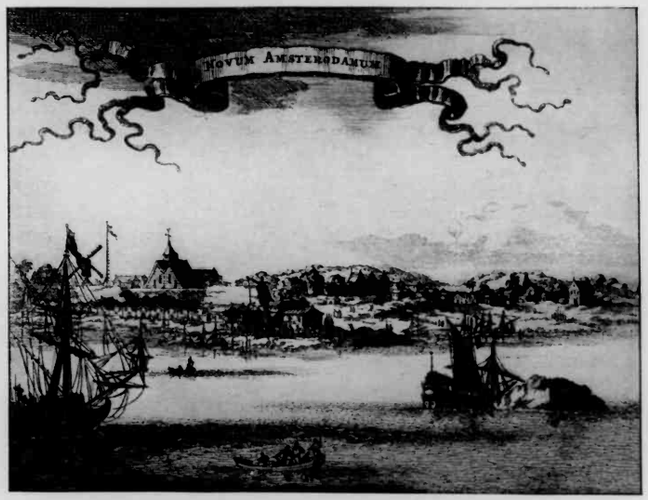
Building a Big Ship and Minuit's Recall

The only instance of shipbuilding on a large scale at this time was the great merchantman *New Netherland*, probably named after the earlier ship of the same name, the building of which was one of the last achievements of the administration of Peter Minuit. She was of 600 or 800 tons,—accounts vary,—being as large as a ship of the line in the Dutch navy, and was armed with thirty guns for defence against pirates and privateers. She proved a white elephant in earning capacity, and Minuit was severely reprimanded for such use of the company's money. He was accused of favoring the colonies at the expense of the company, and was recalled in 1631. So discouraging was this early effort in shipbuilding that it was many years before another large vessel was built in New York. The *Onrust* and the *New Netherland* are the only two vessels known to have been built during these first years of the settlement, though undoubtedly many small boats were constructed and much repairing done.

A new era began in 1638, when, in response to the protest of the patroons, the States-General directed the West India Company to abolish the monopoly in trade and agriculture, and the right to engage in the fur trade was thrown open to the world. A duty of 10 per cent. on all imports from Holland and a duty of 15 per cent. on exports were collected by the company. The opening of trade had an immediate effect in attracting large parties of thrifty, respectable, prosperous settlers from Holland and from the English colonies; and in 1639 the number of farms on Manhattan Island had increased from seven to more than thirty, and soon a flourishing little town arose in the vicinity of what is now Bowling Green and the shores of the East River.

Carrying Trade Open to Settlers

Soon New Amsterdam had become a stopping-place for English shipmasters, as well as for many English traders, whom the opening of the fur trade brought to the little Dutch town, and in 1642 the City Tavern, as the first hotel was known, was built to accommodate the growing transient trade. A further step toward greater prosperity of trade was the abolishment in 1645 of the monopoly of the carrying trade between Holland and New Netherland, which the West India Company, with an exception in favor of the privileged patroons, had hitherto enjoyed. The trade was then thrown open to the vessels of private merchants, and the custom regulations adopted concentrated all commerce at Manhattan. Increases in the export duties caused, however, so much dissatisfaction that in 1651 the duty on tobacco



A VERY EARLY PRINT OF NEW AMSTERDAM.
From *La Galerie Agréable*, by Pierre vander Aa, showing the character of the early Dutch buildings and ships. (Collection of J. Clarence Davies.)

was removed and exports to the British colonies were exempted from duties, though imports from them paid 16 per cent. duty. A valuable tobacco trade with Virginia immediately sprang up. At this time also the African slave trade was opened to the settlers, who, however, were prohibited from visiting the Gold Coast, and not until 1659 were the settlers permitted to trade freely with France, Spain, Italy, and other foreign countries, and then only on the condition that vessels should return with their cargoes to New Netherland or Amsterdam and that furs should be exported to Holland alone.

Though the West India Company was short-sighted in hampering the trade of Manhattan, its directors seem to have had some vision of its commercial future, for in 1652 in a letter to Governor Stuyvesant they urged him to promote commerce, particularly with the Virginians, by which means must "the Manhattans prosper, their population increase, their trade and navigation thrive." In words truly prophetic the letter continues, "for when these once become permanently established, when the ships of New Netherland ride on every part of the ocean, then numbers now looking to that coast with eager eyes will be allured to embark to your island."

Slavery and New Amsterdam

Slavery had been accepted as a matter of course and considered a perfectly respectable trade from the earliest days; but the number of slaves was restricted until 1652 by the company's monopoly of the trade and its failure to pursue it vigorously. The first privately owned slave-ship to enter New York, so far as can be learned, was the *White Horse*, which, in command of Jan de Sweerts and Dirck Pietersen, arrived in the spring of 1655, and the best slaves were sold for $125 each. Many of this importation died immediately. Another slave-ship, the *Oak Tree*, owned by the company, sailed in 1659, and her dimensions give an idea of within how small a compass the poor negroes were crowded. She was 120 feet in length, 25½ feet in width, 11 feet draught, 5 to 6 feet free-board, and had a poop-deck. As her ordinary lading was no less than from 350 to 400 slaves, it is no wonder that from 25 to 50 per cent. were expected to die on the voyage. The *St. John* in 1659 lost many of her slaves from disease on the way back from Africa, and was shipwrecked and captured by an English privateer. But even with the occasional total loss of a ship and the constant loss by death the trade was extremely profitable.

New Amsterdam was incorporated in 1653, and the beaver, as the appropriate symbol of the source of New Amsterdam's wealth, was selected as a part of the seal of the city. The population of the province was then 2,000, that of New Amsterdam 800; and the population continued to increase rapidly. People of means came from the English colonies and from Holland and made small fortunes out of the river trade in furs and the coastwise trade.

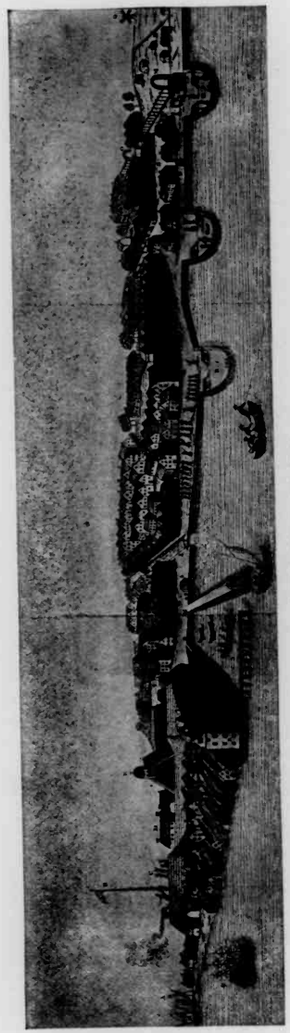
Early Shipyards and the Town Dock

Shipbuilding during the Dutch days was carried on in the locality along the shore road between Wall Street and the present Franklin Square, on the line of Pearl Street, which was called Smit's Valley, afterwards known as the Fly. Here probably was launched the *New Love*, the first three-masted ship known to have been built upon our shores, and owned chiefly by Pieter Cornelisen Vanderveen, who came from Amsterdam, and was the first man to build a brick house in New Amsterdam. In Smit's Valley lived most of the ship-carpenters. Their facilities at first were very limited, for a letter written in 1658 about a "galliot" needed for local use reads, "We are not yet in condition to build such a craft here." At this time the price of a Hudson River sloop was $560, and of a 28-foot canoe, $11.20.

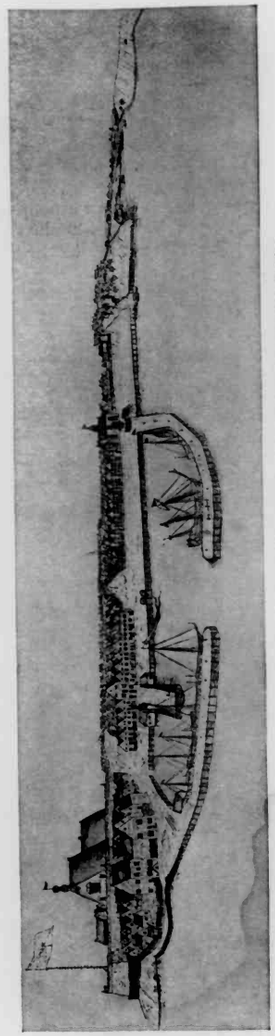
The "hooft," as the city dock was called, was a lively spot toward the end of the Dutch rule. It lay between the present Coenties Slip and Whitehall Street, was the only wharf in Manhattan, and was very small until 1653, when it was extended to fifty feet to accommodate the growing trade. Gangs of negroes loaded and unloaded the scows that plied between the dock and the clumsy ships at anchor in the roadstead. To prevent smuggling and keep the sailors from landing, ships were not allowed to dock. A guide-board off Coenties Slip forbade ships of fifty tons or under to anchor between that point and the Battery. Another near the present Fulton Ferry forbade any vessel to anchor above that point.

Dutch Cargoes and Dutch Merchants

The arrival of a "Holland" ship was an occasion of great rejoicing. People went in boats to meet it, and the national flag was hoisted. These quaint, round-bottomed, high-pooped Dutch ships brought cargoes of dry goods, hardware, groceries, with "cows calves" and "ewe



NEW YORK IN 1673.
(Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)



NEW YORK FROM BROOKLYN HEIGHTS, 1679, SHOWING TOWN DOCK.
(Collection of John D. Crimmins.)

THE STADTHUYS OF NEW YORK, 1679.
Corner of Pearl Street and Coenties Slip. (Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)

milk sheep,"—an important part of Dutch imports,—and sailed away with grain, pelts, lumber, potash, and medicinal herbs. Virginia ketches laden with tobacco, pinkes from the Barbadoes with sugar and molasses, and galleys from Curaçoa bringing fruits and costly dyestuffs came into port at short intervals. "Yachts," as the Dutch called the small sloops used on the rivers, were constantly arriving from the Hudson with beaver and mink skins collected by the Indians, and occasionally after 1652 a slaver came in. Outside Sandy Hook a Dutch man-of-war was stationed to protect shipping from the pirates who took refuge in Long Island Sound. The fur trade was carried on in small sloops. Some of these went on itinerant trading trips among the Indians, each trader having his favorite locality where he had established himself on friendly terms with the natives. Other sloops served as regular packets running from Albany or Kingston to New Amsterdam. The principal down freight was fur, and the up freight was goods for the Albany settlers and for the Indian trade. All the "yachts" were provided with a gun, probably the cumbrous matchlock, set upon a rest on deck.

The four principal merchants of New Amsterdam were Cornelis Steenwyck, Pieter Cornelisen Vanderveen, Isaac Allerton, and Govert Loockermans. Steenwyck was originally in the employ of the West India Company. He had connections in Holland, and was engaged more extensively in the foreign trade than any other New Amsterdam merchant. Isaac Allerton was an Englishman who came to Plymouth

in the *Mayflower*. He owned the ketch *William and John*, traded with Virginia for tobacco, and had a large tobacco warehouse on the East River at Maiden Lane. Govert Loockermans grew rich in the fur trade. He was one of the earliest immigrants, coming as a clerk in the employ of the West India Company, and later was one of the first, if not the first, captain of a regular packet line from New York to Albany. He engaged in the forbidden gun and rum traffic with the Indians, and was sentenced to banishment, but the judgment was never enforced.

Contraband Trade with the Indians

The Dutch found it impossible to resist trading guns and liquor for furs, though this was forbidden by the West India Company, as it was sure to cause Indian wars. But, when a musket would buy twenty beaver skins and one pound of gunpowder was worth from ten to twelve guilders in furs, the profits were tempting. A ship sent out in 1644 from Holland by the Patroon of Rensselaerwyck was by the merest chance searched at Fort Amsterdam, and was found to have on board, but not in her manifest, 4,000 pounds of powder and 200 muskets for trade with the Indians. Although this contraband cargo was confiscated, it probably reached the Indians in the end.

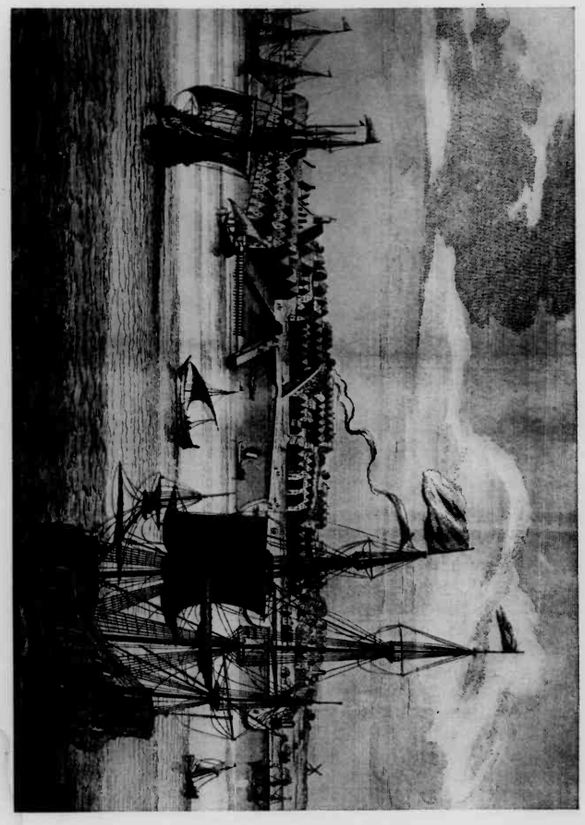
Govert Barent, armorer at Fort Amsterdam, and three others were sentenced to death for a similar offence; but "by the intervention of many good men" they were saved, but their illegally held property was confiscated. As almost every one aspired to have a hand in this trade, public sympathy was in favor of it; and the same stand was taken on the liquor trade, as it was found that much better bargains could be made with drunken Indians than with sober ones.

Wampum and Beaver Skins Legal Tender

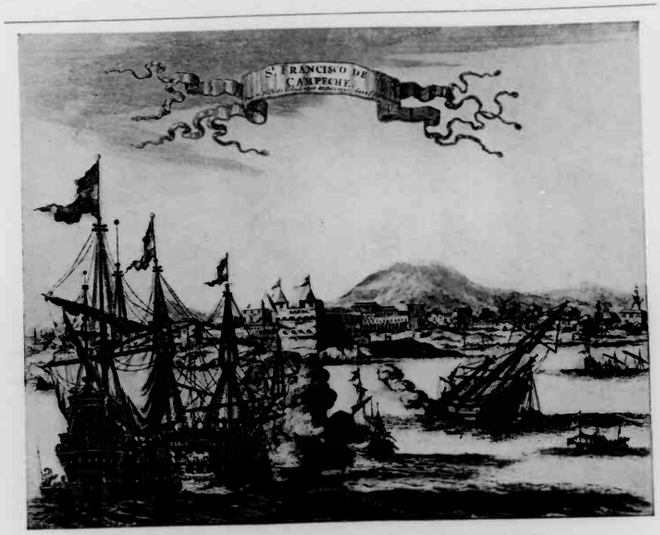
There was practically no coin in the colony, and wampum was legal tender and the only currency in use. The shores of Long Island abounded with the shells of which wampum was made, and the Indians who lived there were the chief manufacturers of it and "the bankers" for the whole coast. This gave the Dutch a great advantage over the other colonies in trading with the Indians. Wampum was of two kinds, black and white. In 1659 the value of four pieces of the black was fixed at a penny. In 1656 Director Stuyvesant made beaver skin a currency also,—one beaver skin to be valued at eight florins, or $3.20.

Holland versus England

When the Dutch came to Manhattan, Holland's commercial star was just rising, and toward the middle of the seventeenth century she took first place as a commercial power. With the help of England, Holland had crushed the sea power of her old enemy, Spain, and soon controlled the carrying trade of the world, nearly half the entire tonnage of Europe being under her flag. Her rapid commercial development began to arouse the jealousy of England, and led the latter to pass the famous Navigation Laws, which forbade importation to England in any but English ships or the ships of the country producing the goods. This blow at the Dutch carrying trade was soon amended to close English colonial ports to Dutch vessels in the same way. But these laws were hard to enforce in the colonies, and there was so much illicit trade between the English and Dutch colonies that



NIEU AMSTERDAM.
New York in America about 1702. Petrus Schenk View. (Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)



AN EARLY SEA FIGHT OFF THE MEXICAN COAST.
Showing the men-of-war of the eighteenth century. From *La Galerie Agréable*, by Pierre vander Aa. (Collection of J. Clarence Davies.)

England's losses of revenue were considerable. It was estimated that £10,000 were annually lost on tobacco alone taken to Manhattan. The Navigation Laws and the difficulty of enforcing them in the colonies led to wars between Holland and England; and thus the commercial importance of New Netherland was the cause of its being taken by England.

Under English Rule

Throughout the colonial period New York was a little seaport town, entirely dependent upon the ocean for its livelihood. Though discouraged by long maritime wars, by privateering and piracy, legitimate trade developed in a variety of directions. The beaver ceased to be the one important support of commerce: a monopoly in the flour business led to a flourishing West Indian trade that was "based upon a loaf of bread." Just before the Revolution broke out, the commerce of New York equalled that of Boston or Philadelphia.

In 1678 Governor Andros estimated the total value of property in the city at $3,000,000 of our money. A merchant worth £1,000, equivalent to $20,000 to-day, was considered rich, and a planter with movables worth half that amount was well off. The Dutch element still predominated.

During the first ten years of the British occupation of New York,

continued war with Holland and the depredations of privateers prevented any considerable expansion of commerce, and in 1669 the presence of nine or ten vessels in port at once, even of traders to Boston, the South, or the West Indies, was an event to provoke comment. Some attention was given to fishing, and whales were taken in New York harbor.

The Bolting Act stimulates Shipping

As soon as conditions justified it, the English government took steps to foster trade. In 1678 shipping was greatly stimulated by the passage of the Bolting Act, which remained in force sixteen years and laid the foundations of New York's foreign trade. This act gave the city a monopoly in bolting flour and in packing flour and biscuit for export, and threw the export trade in breadstuffs into the hands of the millers and merchants of New York, who made the most of their opportunity.

At the time the act was passed the shipping belonging to the city consisted of three ships, seven sloops, and eight boats. In 1694, after the Bolting Act had been in force sixteen years, New York had 60 ships and 102 sloops. When the act was repealed in justice to the rest of the province, the petitioners against the repeal stated that 600 of the 983 buildings in the city depended in some way on the flour trade, and cited that the revenues of the city had increased from £2,000 to £5,000, and that the number of beef cattle slaughtered in the city had increased from 400 to 4,000. The cattle were chiefly for export to the West Indies. Under this stimulus the growth of the city was extraordinary, and it was altogether fitting that the new arms granted in 1686 should carry, in addition to the beaver, the arms of a windmill and two flour barrels.

More and more settlers came, and land rose in value. Fourteen lots near Coenties Slip sold at auction in 1689 for £35 each, and a lot at the foot of Broad Street was valued at £80. This rise was due especially to the building at the foot of Broad Street, at the same time that the canal was filled in, of two basins large enough to harbor a whole fleet of the small ships of the day, which were known as the Wet Docks.

City's Commerce at the Close of the Seventeenth Century

In his report on shipping in 1686, Governor Dongan said: "New York and Albany live wholly on trade with the Indians, English and West Indies. We send to England mostly beaver, whale oil and some tobacco; to the West Indies flour, bread, pease, pork, sometimes horses, and bring from there rum which pays duty and molasses which does not."

At the beginning of the eighteenth century New York appears to have had about half as much trade as Boston, and about one-third of this was in direct violation of the Navigation Laws. The West India trade was handled so intelligently that it grew steadily, and throughout the colonial period rivalled in profits the fur trade. Provisions were shipped from New York and exchanged for West India products, which were taken to England and there exchanged for manufactured goods. These were brought to New York and sold, and thus

there were three profits on each transaction. The bulk of this traffic was with the British islands. There was more trade with the Barbadoes than with any of the other islands, as provisions were taken there not only for the local supply, but for transportation to the Spanish coast and the French islands. Much of the trade was merely an exchange of products; but a considerable cash balance resulted, which was immediately remitted to England to pay for manufactured goods. The wine trade with Madeira was the only losing trade done by New York, as the city consumed more wine than could be paid for by the commodities that could be supplied to Madeira. For a short time, owing to a European war, an enormously profitable wheat trade with Lisbon was carried on for the supply of France. New York also sent quantities of flour to Rhode Island, Boston, and South Carolina. Trade had its ups and downs according to what ports war left open.

Every few years a prolonged maritime war with France or Spain, or both, would break out, and merchantmen ran the gauntlet of warships and privateers. Piracy, too, was an ever-present danger that did much to discourage commerce, and there were so many interruptions to legitimate trade that New York merchants plunged into privateering at the outbreak of every war.

Piracy and the Red Sea Trade

So short was the step from privateering, in which all the leading merchants were interested, to piracy, and so outrageous were the tariffs and strict the Navigation Acts, that a spirit of lawlessness, which tolerated piracy and encouraged smuggling, was bred among even the most representative merchants.

When war broke out in 1688 between France and Spain, and England joined Spain, New York became the principal headquarters for privateersmen and adventurers from all Europe, to whom the name "pirates" might justly be applied. Many of these, in times of peace, sailed under the skull and cross-bones, and for almost fifteen years they not only found New York a safe haven, but greatly enriched her merchants, numbers of whom engaged indirectly in piracy through what was called "the Red Sea trade."

There were two systems by which New York merchants profited by piracy. The most daring was straight piracy with privateering for a cloak. Heavily armed ships would secure from the governor letters of marque entitling them to war upon the king's enemies, and then, when safe at sea, they would seize any ship they met. The safer plan, and that of the more conservative New York merchants, was to fit out an ordinary merchant ship and send it for trade to Madagascar, where the pirates had a fortified rendezvous. These ships in "the Red Sea trade" would leave New York with an oddly assorted cargo of arms, gunpowder, cannon-balls, strong spirits, and general sea stores, and trade with the sea-rovers for Eastern stuffs, spices, precious stones, and deep-toned Arabian gold.

Pirates Mason and Coates

The first pirate to use New York as a base was William Mason, who in 1689 obtained letters authorizing him "to war as in his wisdom should seem meet" against the French. Several other ships received

THE THOMAS BAKEWELL VIEW OF NEW YORK IN 1746.
(Collection of New York Historical Society.)

SOUTH PROSPECT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, BY WILLIAM BURGESS, 1717.
(Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)

similar letters, and, as they engaged only in lawful privateering and brought in several French prizes, there is no reason to suppose that Mason's letter was issued in bad faith. Very likely he didn't premeditate piracy, and took it up only because he failed to make his expected profits out of privateering. In piracy, however, he was extremely successful, and at the end of three years, when spoils were divided, every man before the mast received 1,800 pieces-of-eight, about $1,800. Mason then dropped out of sight; but in 1693 his ship came back in charge of Edward Coates, a notorious pirate. Coates "negotiated" with Governor Fletcher, and at Fletcher's trial testified that permission to enter New York without danger cost him £1,800, which was divided among the governor and his council. The governor's share of the bribe was the pirate's ship, which he sold to the irreproachable Caleb Heathcote for £800. When news of this deal between Coates and Fletcher leaked out, and it was known that New York would sanction piracy under the guise of privateering, adventurers under the black flag flocked to New York from all over the world.

Pirate Tew comes to New York

One of the most notorious, Captain Thomas Tew, soon appeared in New York, and between him and Governor Fletcher a close friendship sprang up. He had recently returned from a highly successful cruise in the Indian Ocean, where he had captured several ships of the East India Company and made his name a terror in that part of the world. Coming to America to secure a new privateering outfit, he made an unsuccessful attempt in Bristol, R.I., a town particularly lax toward pirates,—evidence enough of his reputation.

He then came to New York, where he was made welcome and had little difficulty in securing an outfit. A most picturesque figure was Captain Tew as he appeared in the streets and taverns of New York,—quite piratical in all but size. He is described as a slight, dark man of about forty, who dressed richly and scattered his gold with a free hand. A blue cap with a band of cloth of silver covered his dark locks, and his blue jacket, cut in the latest buccaneering mode, was profusely embroidered with gold and trimmed with buttons of mother-of-pearl. In striking contrast to his blue jacket were loose white linen trunks that came to his knees and set off his elaborately worked stockings. Around his neck was a wonderful chain of yellow Arabian gold, and in his belt a dagger, its hilt set with precious stones. His fierce eye and insolent manner reminded his most casual comrades that he feared neither devil nor man, and was the sort of a leader that would attract the very devils of a piratical port.

The hospitality of Governor Fletcher's home was thrown open to him. He was often seen beside the governor in the latter's coach, they exchanged valuable presents of jewelry, and, when he departed with a privateering commission and resumed his piracy in the Indian Ocean, he left behind him a warm friend in Governor Fletcher. Later, when brought to trial for complicity in freebooting, Fletcher admitted his friendship with Tew, and stated that Tew had promised to abandon piracy and become an honest privateer. He acknowledged that he

SOME LEADING MERCHANTS OF THE COLONIAL PERIOD.
John Cruger was first president of the New York Chamber of Commerce. (Collection of the New York Chamber of Commerce.)

"found the captain agreeable and companionable, possessed of good sense and a great memory." He had invited Tew to his home not alone for his agreeable companionship, but also in the hope of reclaiming him to a better life, and the only serious defect he had observed in his moral character "was his vile habit of swearing, which, however, he hoped to correct by serious admonition and by lending him a book on the subject."

Pirate John Hoar, the Merchants' Syndicate, and the Red Sea Traffic

Among the pirates with whom New York merchants had an even more intimate connection was John Hoar, an Irishman, who had been a buccaneer in the West Indies. He openly recruited his men for the Red Sea trade, or "on the account," to use another euphemistic phrase then popular, and his financial backing was arranged by a syndicate of twenty-two New York merchants. He sailed in 1695 with a privateering commission supplied by Governor Fletcher. About a year later the same syndicate quietly fitted out another ship, the *Fortune*, ostensibly a slaver, though her lading was described as "goods suitable for pirates." She made straight for Madagascar, where she met Hoar's ship laden with plunder, exchanged cargoes with him, and returned to New York, bringing some of Hoar's crew.

As this profitable arrangement amounted to direct piracy, and was a little too risky to be practised generally, the more conservative merchants were satisfied with the modest profits of the Red Sea trade. This trade lent a picturesque magnificence to the city, for rare Persian fabrics, costly perfumes and spices, Oriental rugs, poured into New York. Arabian gold was current coin, and New York women wore robes embroidered for Eastern queens. Jewels and costly ornaments of Oriental workmanship in gold, silver, ivory, and pearl were worn. The taverns along the water front were full of wild-looking sailors, bristling with knives and ready for any desperate enterprise, while their captains were profusely entertained by the merchants and the landed gentry that they enriched.

Stephen De Lancey's Venture

A typical venture in the Red Sea trade was that of Stephen De Lancey —a man of wealth and unassailable position—in 1698, in the ship *Nassau*, in command of Captain Giles Shelley. Rum that cost but two shillings a gallon was sold for £3 at Madagascar. Pipes of Madeira wine worth £19 brought £300. Gunpowder was sold at a similar advance. The voyage netted the owners about £30,000. In addition to profits from trade, the *Nassau* brought twenty-nine pirates as passengers, who paid £4,000 for their passage.

Even such trips were not without their dangers. At the time the *Nassau* made her prosperous voyage, two other vessels—one the *Prophet Daniel*—were captured by pirates, and a third, belonging to Frederick Philipse, was seized by an East India Company's frigate, presumably for taking to direct piracy. The *Prophet Daniel* was a sister ship of the *Nassau:* she too cleared for Madagascar ostensibly for slaves. Slave dealing was then a very respectable business, and young John Cruger, afterwards mayor of New York for several terms, and first president of the Chamber of Commerce, acted as supercargo

BERNARD RATZEN'S MAP OF NEW YORK IN 1767.

The inscription above reads, "To his Excellency Sir Henry Moore, Baronet, Captain General and Governor in Chief in and over the Province of New York and the territories dependent thereon in America, Chancellor and Vice-Admiral of the same, this plan of the City of New York is most Humbly Inscribed by His Excellency's Most Obedient Servant Bern'd Ratzen, Lieutenant in the Sixtieth Regiment, surveyed in 1767. Published January 12, 1776, by Jefferys & Faden, corner of St. Martin's Lane, Charing Cross." (Collection of John D. Crimmins.)

on this voyage. His log-book describes the seizure of his vessel at Fort Dolphin on the African coast by Abraham Samuels, the pirate, with whom they came to trade. Samuels turned the vessel over to Evan Jones, who with his crew came from Westchester, N.Y.

Suppression of Piracy

Accused of abetting piracy, Governor Fletcher was recalled, and Lord Bellomont, who was sent out to take his place, immediately set about suppressing it. About this time Frederick Philipse, a member of the council and the richest man in New York, expected a ship from Madagascar, and, fearing her cargo would be confiscated, sent his son Adolphus to meet her in a vessel bound ostensibly for Virginia. This vessel cruised about outside until the expected ship arrived, and relieved her of a large cargo of Oriental goods, with which she sailed to the Delaware, leaving the Madagascar ship with nothing but negroes aboard. The scheme failed, however, as the goods were seized when on their way to Hamburg, and the men were brought to trial.

If the pirates who marketed their plunder through New York had refrained from touching English ships, they would probably have been left undisturbed, but they boldly attacked the vessels of the East India Company and English ships in West India waters. Then in 1695 New York pirates took one of the sacred ships of the Great Mogul, laden with presents for Mecca. The mogul learned that the corsairs were English, and threatened reprisals. The East India Company, fearing the mogul's vengeance, applied to the king for a frigate to protect their interests in these seas. None could be spared on account of war with France, and this suggested to Robert Livingston the idea of a private expedition against the pirates. So he proposed the plan to Bellomont, and the two secured the support of the king, Lord Somers, and the Earl of Oxford, who shared with Bellomont and Livingston the expense of equipping a vessel. Profits were to be divided among the owners, with a liberal share for the captain.

Captain William Kidd

Livingston selected Captain William Kidd, a man of some wealth and position, to command the vessel, as he was an efficient commander and well thought of in New York. His commission, issued under the great seal of England, was directed "to the trusty and well beloved Captain Kidd, commander of the ship *Adventure*, galley." For some months he cruised along the American coast, and was considered useful in protecting shipping. Then he sailed for the coast of Africa, and turned pirate. After securing a fortune, he returned to New York in 1699, and, thinking that no one had heard of his piracy, went ashore on Gardiner's Island, off Long Island, and buried a large treasure. He then went to Boston, was arrested, and sent to England for trial. A political issue was made of his case because of the noblemen involved in it, and he was executed in London in 1701, though at his trial he was proved guilty of the death of only one man, a mutinous seaman at whom he had thrown a bucket.

New York Privateers

Though the Red Sea trade and piracy were brought to an end by Lord Bellomont,—but not without much friction with his council, most of whom were merchants involved in it,—privateering flourished during every war throughout the eighteenth century, and enormous treasure was brought into port from Spanish treasure-ships and French vessels laden with costly Oriental stuffs. Nearly every merchant of consequence had an interest in not only one, but many privateering ventures. Many merchants at the gate of their manor-houses had figure-heads of vessels captured by their privateers.

Privateersman Tongrelow and the New York Galley

The opportunity given by the War of the Spanish Succession, beginning in 1702, was quickly seized upon in New York, and a fleet of twenty sail soon cleared the port. Among the most famous and daring of these privateers was Captain Regnier Tongrelow, of the *New York Galley*. The newspapers of the day give accounts of many prizes brought into New York by this great fighter, who feared no odds, and, when given a choice, always picked for his adversary the biggest ship in sight. A writer in the *News-Letter* learned "that Captain Tongrelow cruises off the Havana; and that the governor thereof sent out two privateer sloops to take him: but that Tongrelow had taken both." The Spanish governor apparently persisted, however, for a month later the *News-Letter* reports, "On 30th last arrived here Captain Tongrelow who was chased from the Havana by a ship, a brigantine and a sloop who were fitted out thence to take him."

Prowess of Captain Nat Burches

Another bold privateer was Captain Tom Penniston, who never hesitated to engage two ships of the enemy at one time. Captain Nat Burches was another daring fellow. He commanded Tongrelow's tender, a little sloop of six guns and twenty-seven men. The *News-Letter* of August 5, 1706, reports his meeting with a Spanish ship of 600 tons, 24 guns, 250 men. He disabled the ship, forced her to run ashore, and at last made an arrangement with the Spaniards by which he took their lading of brandies and wines, but left the rest of the cargo untouched. So Burches came home with fifty pipes of canary and brandy, but was soon off again, and apparently ended his days by falling into the hands of the enemy.

When ashore, the privateersmen frequented the taverns along the water front, particularly a long-roofed, low-porched resort kept by Captain Benjamin Kierstede. They were wont to get drunk, and to fight and riot about the streets of the town, to the indignation and often to the danger of the staid citizens.

Post Boy calls for "gentlemen sailors and others" for the War of 1740

Immediately after the declaration of war against France, in 1740, the newspaper *Post Boy* was full of announcements of the fitting out of brigs and sloops for a cruising voyage against His Majesty's enemies and with calls for "gentlemen sailors and others" to join their crews, and before the end of the war twenty-nine privateers had been fitted out, which with one exception were small sloops, brigs and brigantines of from 125 to 200 tons with batteries of from 12 to 16 little six-pounders and as many swivels, and a crew of seldom over 100 men.

Magnificent fighting was done during the war that broke out in 1756. 130 privateers were commissioned in New York, and in the first two years of the war upward of 80 prizes were brought into port, worth

perhaps $5,000,000 of to-day's money. In 1758 Lieutenant-Governor De Lancey, writing to Secretary Pitt, said, "The Country is drained of many able-bodied men by almost a madness to go a privateering."

In addition to prizes taken by privateers, many were brought into New York by the king's ships. At one time Captain Peter Warren, afterwards Admiral Warren, who married Susannah De Lancey and whose country seat was near Christopher Street in Old Greenwich Village, commanded the New York station, and from the transactions arising from the condemnation of his prizes the De Lancey family and other merchants were greatly enriched.

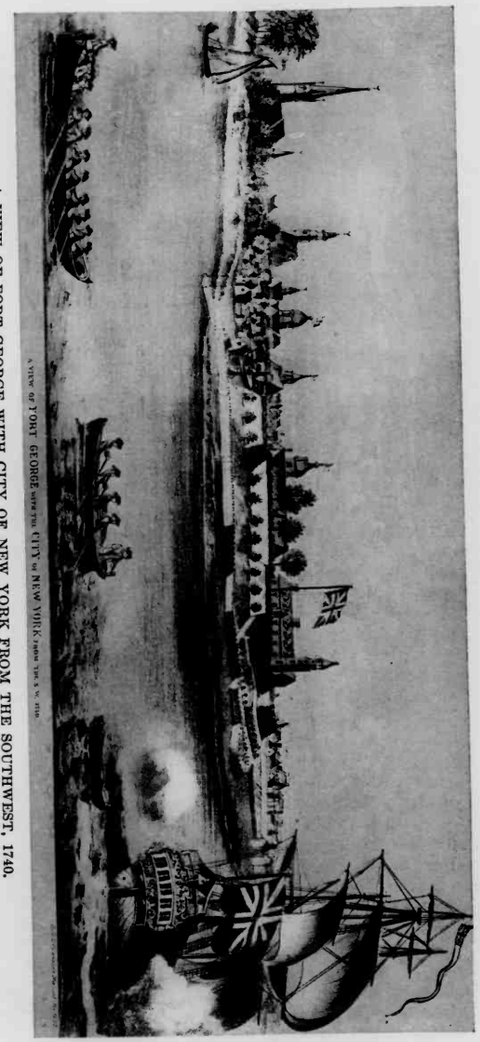
Legitimate Trade during the Eighteenth Century

In spite of all interruptions, New York did not neglect ordinary trade, though it grew but slowly. From 1717 to 1720 imports averaged £21,254 yearly, and exports £52,239. For the next two years the figures were about the same. Between 215 and 235 vessels cleared yearly, the figures for Philadelphia being about the same. By 1735 the increase in shipping had greatly altered the appearance of the city. Wharves and docks had been built, and there were shipyards from Whitehall Street to near the site of Catherine Street Ferry. Pearl Street was no longer the river-bank, and Water Street had been raised above the water. In 1747 ninety-nine vessels were owned in New York, with a tonnage of 4,513 tons, and 755 seamen were employed. Governor Tryon's report to the English government states that in 1762 New York had 477 vessels, carrying crews amounting to 3,552 men, and that in 1772 the number of vessels had risen to 709 while the number of men had fallen to 3,372,—fewer men being needed to man vessels in times of peace than in times of war. Exports were valued at £150,000, and imports at £100,000.

At the time of the Revolution the trade of New York equalled, if it did not exceed, that of Philadelphia or Boston. Much of it was with the Spanish and French colonies, and was forbidden by the Navigation Acts, though connived at by the government. Consequently, when the government changed its policy and decided to enforce these laws, it was a heavy blow to the city, and her merchants were foremost in protesting. The support of the non-importation agreements entered into by all the colonies was firmer in New York than in any of the other colonies.

Shipbuilding before the Revolution

Though seafaring people and those whose business depended upon them made up the bulk of the population of New York, there was comparatively little shipbuilding done. It developed slowly in a small way. Toward the end of the seventeenth century Rip van Dam, a prominent merchant and citizen, built many ships. In 1693 John Marsh, a carpenter, applied to Governor Fletcher for aid to perfect an invention to increase the speed of ships. In 1728 shipyards occupied the river front between Beekman Street and Catherine Street, then the northern limits of the city, and in 1740 there were three shipyards in the neighborhood of Dover Street, and this was called the "shipyards district." John Dally, John Rivers, and Joseph and Daniel Latham are mentioned as shipbuilders, but the principal one was prob-



A VIEW OF FORT GEORGE WITH CITY OF NEW YORK FROM THE SOUTHWEST, 1740.
(Collection of John D. Crimmins.)

ably William Walton, who is known to have built several vessels for English owners. Though in 1774 Governor Tryon reported that ships to the value of £30,000 sterling were that year built in New York for England, the right kind of labor was lacking; and Massachusetts could build at much less cost, and consequently secured the bulk of the business.

The backward condition of the shipbuilding industry in New York as compared with other colonies is proved by the report of the English inspector-general of customs, who stated that in 1769 the colonies built and launched 389 vessels—113 square-rigged, 276 schooners and sloops—with an aggregate burden of 20,000 tons. Of these Massachusetts provided nearly one-half. Rhode Island came next, while New York had only 5 square-rigged vessels and 14 sloops and schooners, measuring in all 955 tons. Pennsylvania owned 1,344 tons, Virginia 1,249 tons, North and South Carolina 1,396 tons, Connecticut 1,542 tons. Georgia, with one sloop and one schooner, alone ranked below New York.

Great Merchants of the Colonial Period

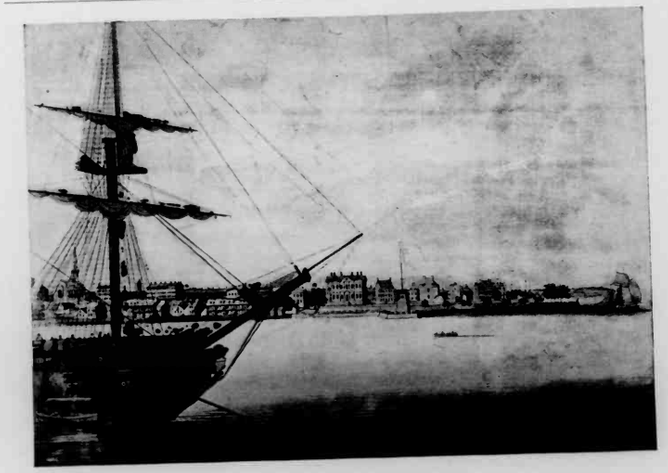
Throughout the eighteenth century there were in New York many conspicuous merchant families, who ruled the city and were prominent for several generations. Among the well-known names was John Cruger. The first to bear the name was alderman from the Dock Ward from 1712 to 1733, and mayor from 1739 to 1744. His son John was alderman of the Dock Ward from 1754 to 1756, then mayor, and was also the first president of the Chamber of Commerce. The family owned many ships and a wharf on the east side of Whitehall Slip, and their trade was largely with Bristol, England, and the West Indies. In the fire of 1776 they lost six warehouses.

The Livingstons

The Livingstons were also distinguished merchants. Philip, son of Philip, second lord of the manor of Livingston, was active in privateering, but made his fortune in the general importing business. He was alderman from the East Ward from 1754 to 1762, member of the Assembly from 1759 to 1769 and Speaker of the House in the last term, member of the First and Second Continental Congresses, and signer of the Declaration of Independence. Many other members of this family were prominent merchants.

The Waltons

The Waltons were among the real merchant princes of the eighteenth century, their wealth being cited in Parliament as evidence of the prosperity of the colonists. The founder of the family, William Walton, had a shipyard on the East River, and was commonly called "Boss" Walton because of his active superintendence. He sailed his own vessels to the West Indies and the Spanish Main. The origin of his fortune was a privilege granted him by the Spaniards of St. Augustine and the West Indies to supply the garrisons with provisions. He kept a permanent factor on the West Indian coast, and his nephew enjoyed the same monopoly. His nephew William sailed his uncle's vessels to Curaçoa, and in the French wars ran his vessels as privateers. He was a member of the Assembly in 1751–1752 and until 1759, joining the De Lancey party. In 1758 he became a member



NEW YORK
1790.

A very rare print, showing the west side of the city from the Battery to a point north of Trinity Church, also "the great house built for General Washington" and the "Church." (Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)

of His Majesty's Council. Many other members of his family were prominent merchants and they were the heaviest underwriters of the day.

The Ludlows and Others

The Ludlows were another great merchant family in the general importing business. They were early members of the Chamber of Commerce. Alsop was also a prominent name in New York commerce for many years. John and Richard were wealthy merchants. John was a delegate to the First and Second Continental Congresses and first president of the Chamber of Commerce after its reorganization in 1784. The Bayard family were sugar refiners, "the mystery" of which they introduced to New York. So were the Van Cortlandts, the Roosevelts, and the Cuylers. The Schuylers, Verplancks, Whites, Baches, Murrays, and Franklins were shipping merchants and importers. The Gouverneurs traded with the West Indies and the Spanish Main. The Schermerhorns were in the coasting trade and in ship-chandlery. Among the most adventurous merchants was Lawrence Kortright, whose armed vessels scoured the seas during the war in 1759–1761. The largest ship-owner in New York just before the Revolution was Robert Murray, a "Friend." He owned more tons of shipping than any one else in America, and was celebrated not only on that account, but also because he was one of the five New Yorkers rich enough to

keep a coach. This he called "my leather conveniency" to avoid any appearance of ostentation. His business was chiefly with the West Indies.

Separation from England cost Americans their valuable trade with the British West Indies, and, until the adoption of the Constitution in 1789 gave Congress some basis upon which to negotiate commercial treaties with foreign countries, the carrying trade with Europe was closed to us by discriminating duties. Consequently, American enterprise looked to the Orient, and directly after the war the foundations were laid for the splendid trade that brought wealth to the country until the American sailing vessel was driven from the sea.

The Rise of the American Merchant Marine

The first real legislation of the First Congress of the United States was to encourage shipping, and between 1789 and 1795 the merchant fleet of the United States increased from 201,562 tons to 747,965 tons. The Napoleonic wars caused a great demand for American products, threw the carrying trade of Europe into American hands, and for a time left the United States no real competition in the China trade. By 1820, in spite of the repressive influence of the Embargo Act and the War of 1812, our shipping had reached 1,280,167 tons, and half of this was in the foreign trade.

Between 1820 and 1830 ninety per cent. of our carrying trade was controlled by American vessels. No other country had ever made such marvellously rapid progress: our ships were admired in every port in the world. Great Britain alone disputed our supremacy. Between 1847 and 1858 our tonnage employed in the foreign trade more than doubled, reaching 2,300,000 tons as compared with 943,000 tons in 1846. By 1860 the United States owned a greater tonnage than the United Kingdom, and nearly as much as the whole British Empire,—2,496,000 tons in all. During the great days of the American merchant marine New York filled an important place. In every sea often the answer to the hail of passing craft was, "To —— from New York."

Beginning of the China Trade

At the close of the Revolution New York had lost about half her population, and her commerce and shipping were completely destroyed even to her fishing fleets. But within six months of the time the city was evacuated by the British the *Empress of China* sailed from New York for Canton, and was the first American vessel to make the voyage to China, sailing February 22, 1784. She had a displacement of 360 tons, was manned by a crew of 46, and was the first American vessel to be copper-bottomed. A number of New York and Philadelphia merchants fitted her out, and her cargo was mostly ginseng. She carried with her sea letters signed by the President and Secretary of Congress, and reached Canton Roads August 23, arriving home May 11, 1785. The voyage netted $30,000,—25 per cent. on the investment. This was considered small, as profits of 100 per cent. were often made by ships in the China trade.

Several other New York vessels immediately followed the *Empress of China's* lead. In the season of 1787 three of the five American

vessels at Canton were from New York. One of the first and most famous New York vessels in the China trade was the *Experiment*, a little sloop of 80 tons, hardly more seaworthy than the Hudson River sloop of to-day. She carried a crew of fifteen men and boys, and was commanded by Stewart Dean, a plucky privateersman in the Revolution. She mounted six carriage guns, and carried plenty of muskets, boarding-pikes, and cutlasses, as there were pirates to be reckoned with. The *Experiment* made a profitable voyage, taking out ginseng and bringing back silk and tea. Not a man was lost, and the return voyage was made in four months and twelve days.

New York's Rapid Growth

New York's rapid recovery after the Revolution was amazing. Within five years the population had reached 30,000 and commerce had returned to its former figure. Work was begun filling in the East River to afford deep-water wharfage for the larger ships needed for the long East India voyages.

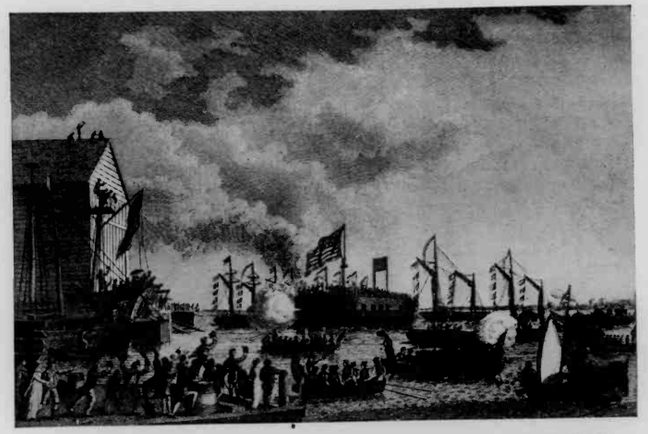
The merchants of New York were quick to see the need of a strong central government, and through the Chamber of Commerce, reorganized in 1784, took steps to secure the ratification of the Constitution by the State, thus helping to pave the way for the marvellous growth in the American merchant marine that followed the fostering shipping legislation of 1789.

The city responded to improved conditions at once. During the next twelve years (1789–1801) duties on foreign goods imported into New York increased from less than $150,000 to more than $500,000. Exports increased in value from $2,500,000 to almost $20,000,000. Tonnage of vessels in the foreign trade ran up from 18,000 tons to 146,000 tons, and in the coasting trade from below 5,000 tons to above 34,000 tons. At the opening of this period Massachusetts had 195,401 tons of shipping, and New York had fourth place with 92,737 tons. By 1801 New York had reached first place and has never relinquished it. In 1806 the revenue from the port of New York amounted to one-quarter of the national revenue.

Founding of the Bank of the Manhattan Company

The capitalists of old New York were all ship-owners and merchants, so shipping operations were usually financed very informally. At the Tontine Coffee House or at Bradford's, merchants met to take shares in one another's ventures, but as the business of New York became more complex with the city's growth it began to require the service and convenience of banks. In 1799 there was but one bank in the city, and, as the necessary business of New York justified the establishing of another one, the Bank of the Manhattan Company began business on September 1, 1799, at 40 Wall Street. It had been organized April 2, 1799, as The Manhattan Company to supply New York City with pure water. Among the subscribers to the two million dollars capital stock were some of the leading merchants and men of New York, such as Daniel Ludlow, John B. Church, William Laight, Pascal N. Smith, Samuel Osgood, John Stevens, John B. Coles, John Brown, De Witt Clinton, Aaron Burr, Augustus H. Lawrence, Frederick De Peyster, John Aspinwall, Thomas LeRoy, R. R. Livingston, Robert L.

NEW YORK FROM THE HEIGHTS NEAR BROOKLYN IN 1823.
To Thomas Dixon, Esq., this plate is respectfully Inscribed by his Obliged Servt. Willm. G. Wall. Painted and published by Willm. G. Wall, New York, 1823.
(Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)



LAUNCH OF THE STEAM FRIGATE "FULTON" THE FIRST AT NEW YORK, OCTOBER 29, 1814.

"She was 150 feet long and 50 feet wide. Will mount 28 long 32-pounders and 2 50-pounders. (Columbiads.) Drawn by J. J. Barralet from a sketch by Morgan taken on the spot. B. Tanner, engraver, Philadelphia. Published March 27, 1815, by B. Tanner, No. 78 South 8th Street." (Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)

Livingston, Schuyler Livingston, William Cutting, James Morris, Henry Rutger, Gilbert Aspinwall, Nicholas Gouverneur, John Delafield, Nicholas Low, and others. It stood behind the shipbuilders and shipowners and aided those who were developing the early steamship business. Among its depositors have been such representative merchants as John W. Low, W. H. Barker, G. G. Howland, Jacob Walton, Archibald Gracie, John C. Green, David Griswold, William Rhinelander, Jacob Rhinelander, Gerard Beekman, Nathaniel Cruger, C. Griswold, and most of the men of New York who were the builders of the city's commerce. The growth of the bank has kept pace with the commercial needs of the city.

World-wide Expansion of Trade

New York's fur trade had always been extensive and profitable. With the opening of the China trade it was found that better prices could be obtained there than in Europe, and from 1804 to 1830 one of the chief articles of export to the East was furs. Many New York vessels were engaged in seal hunting, and sea-otter had recently been discovered on the northwest coast of America. So many New York vessels stopped there to collect skins on the way to Canton, where they exchanged them for teas, spices, camphor, sugar, coffee, porcelain, silk, nankeen, and other fabrics valuable in proportion to bulk and therefore profitable for carriage. The surplus was reshipped from New York to Hamburg and other Northern European ports. Between

1804 and 1812 much ginseng was taken to China, and later large amounts of opium, and from 1811 to 1831 it was profitable to take sandalwood from Pacific islands to China, in one year 1,333 tons being carried. American manufactured goods later made up the bulk of the cargoes to China, and tea and cassia were the principal imports.

Merchants and Ship-owners of New York during the First Part of the Nineteenth Century

Among the principal ship-owners of the day was John Jacob Astor. His large fleet sailed every sea and brought back to New York Oriental and European manufactured goods. One of his most famous projects was the founding of a colony at the mouth of the Columbia, to be supported by the fur trade with the Indians. He fitted out the *Tonquin* and established a trading post, which was captured by a British man-of-war in 1812.

Jacob Barker was another large ship-owner. At the time of the War of 1812 he owned more ships than any one else in America except William Gray, of Salem; and his ships went to many countries, carrying on a particularly active business with Russia. For five years he had a contract to supply oil to the United States light-house service, and to secure the oil sent his own whalers into Southern Pacific waters. When Congress authorized in 1813 a loan of $16,000,000, the proposals advertised failed. So Barker went to work circulating a subscription list, to which the New York merchants rallied and the loan was a success.

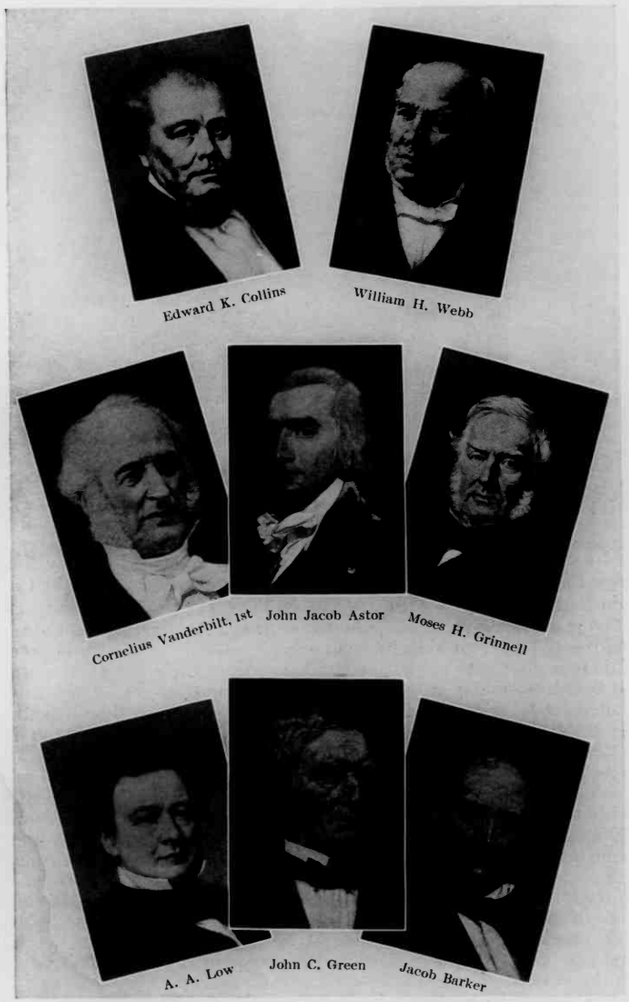
Archibald Gracie was another shipping merchant prominent before the War of 1812. Until the seizure of his ships by Napoleon under the Berlin and Milan decrees forced him to failure, he did a large business. During these troubled times one of the most uniformly successful merchants was Robert Lenox, who escaped the disasters that ruined so many ship-owners. One of the oldest shipping firms was LeRoy, Bayard & Co., founded in 1790. In 1800 it was the largest commercial house in the city. During the war it sent out fast vessels to Europe and the East Indies, which, when they escaped capture, made enormous profits.

Tonnage and Privateering in 1812

As shipping was the principal support of the city, the War of 1812 and the Embargo Act preceding it pressed heavily upon New York. In 1812 the registered tonnage of the port was 266,548 tons, equal to that of Boston and Philadelphia together. With the war all trade came to a standstill, but the declaration of war authorized privateering.

Within four months 26 privateers fitted out from New York, with 212 guns and more than 2,200 men. Many of these were wonderfully swift, as they had been built to escape search and impressment by British men-of-war. These fast, beautiful brigs and schooners, well armed and heavily manned, were seldom captured, and brought wealth to their owners. One New York privateer of 17 guns and 150 men, during a single cruise, was chased by seventeen armed British vessels, but escaped, bringing into port goods valued at $300,000 and a large amount of specie.

The *General Armstrong*, whose fight at Fayal is the most thrilling in our naval history, was owned by a syndicate of New York merchants. After five lucky privateering cruises this small brigantine of seven guns



FIRST LEADERS OF COMMERCE. THE MEN WHO HELPED TO BUILD THE AMERICAN MARITIME TRADE.
(Collection of the New York Chamber of Commerce.)

VIEW OF NEW YORK QUARANTINE, STATEN ISLAND, 1833.
Published by Parker & Clover, 180 Fulton Street, New York. Painted and engraved by W. J. Bennett. (Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)

and a crew of ninety men was caught in the harbor of Fayal by three large English ships-of-war. She was commanded by the intrepid Captain Samuel Reid. After three attacks the enemy, with 136 guns and 1,200 men, succeeded in disabling the *General Armstrong*, and Captain Reid was forced to sink her and escape to the shore with his men. This splendid fight delayed the English squadron ten days while a British fleet, assembling in the West Indies for an attack on New Orleans, waited for their arrival, and this gave Andrew Jackson time to gather his army at New Orleans and made it possible for him to win his astonishing victory.

The New York Packet Lines

At the close of the War of 1812 the need of a closer commercial relation with the Old World grew so pressing that some of the more enterprising merchants of New York determined to establish lines of swift sailing packets between the New and the Old World. Accordingly, there came into existence in 1816 the famous Black Ball Line, the first American packet line between New York and Liverpool. It was founded by Francis and Jeremiah Thompson, Isaac Wright, Benjamin Marshall, and other New York capitalists, among whom the shrewd, far-sighted Quaker element predominated. At first the packets sailed on the first of every month, and later, as the competition of other lines arose, on the sixteenth also.

The four original Black Ballers were of only four to five hundred tons, but they made the old merchantmen appear very inadequate,

and commanded the best cargoes. The Red Star Line, established in 1821 and owned by Byrnes, Grimble & Co., the Swallow Tail Line, owned by Fish, Grinnell & Co., afterwards Grinnell, Minturn & Co., entered the field soon after the founding of the Black Ball Line; and by 1822 New York enjoyed weekly packet service to Liverpool and a line to London. Between 1822 and 1832 three lines were established to Havre. Other famous lines were St. George's, E. E. Morgan's London Line, Spofford & Tileston's Liverpool Line, and E. K. Collins's Dramatic Line with vessels named the *Sheridan*, *Garrick*, *Siddons*, etc.

During the first nine years of the service the passage from Sandy Hook to Liverpool averaged twenty-three days, and the return trip forty days. Many of the later packets sometimes made the passage from New York to Liverpool in sixteen days, and few there were who did not succeed in making the run in seventeen days. Six of these line packets made records of fifteen days or less to Liverpool,—the *Montezuma*, the *Independence*, the *Patrick Henry*, the *Southampton*, the *St. Andrew*, and the *Dreadnought*. Large were the wagers placed upon the transatlantic races, which were of frequent occurrence between the packets. In 1837 the *Columbia*, 597 tons, of the Black Ball Line, under Captain De Peyster, and the *Sheridan*, of the Dramatic Line, commanded by Captain Russell, then on her first voyage, raced to Liverpool for stakes of $10,000. Though the *Sheridan* was only 895 tons, she carried a crew of forty before the mast with regular pay of $25 a month and the promise of a bonus of $50 each if the ship won. The ships sailed together, and the *Columbia* won in sixteen days, the *Sheridan* arriving two days later.

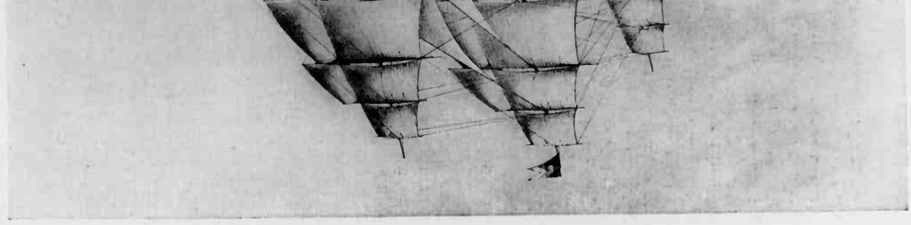
Ownership of Packets

Agents, builders, and captains, all were part owners of these packets and speedily grew rich. The agent owned perhaps one-eighth of a vessel; the builder, in order to secure the job of repairing, which averaged $500 on the round trip, possessed another eighth; another eighth was owned by the captain; and perhaps a sixteenth was owned by the block-maker and the sail-maker. Competition between the different lines was keen, and the tonnage kept increasing, especially after 1842. In 1854 the *Amazon* and *Palestine*, 1,800 tons each, the largest of the Atlantic sailing packets and the last ships of the Morgan Line, were launched from their ways.

These packets outstripped all foreign competition and even received the attention of the English Parliament, for a committee of the House of Commons reported that American ships sailing between New York and London had the preference over English ships as to both freight and insurance. Writing from New York in 1842, Dickens said, "Below here by the waterside, where the bowsprits of ships stretch across the footway and almost thrust themselves into the windows, lie the noble American vessels which have made their packet service the finest in the world." The whole country, as well as New York, took the greatest possible pride in their packets and their captains. No matter what the weather was, ships sailed on the day set, leaving the piers with sails set, and cheered by the multitudes who gathered to see the depart-

SOUTH ST. from MAIDEN LANE.

H. I. Megary's print of W. I. Bennett's drawing. The east side water front at the height of the clipper ship era.
(Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)



"FLYING CLOUD."

Built in 1851 by Donald McKay for Enoch Train, purchased by Grinnell, Minturn & Co., of New York. Length, 225 feet; beam, 40 feet 8 inches; tonnage, 1,783. Sailed from New York to San Francisco in 1851 in 89 days and 21 hours, in one day covering 433½ statute miles, under Captain Josiah Perkins Cressy. (Courtesy of Dr. O. T. Howe.)

CUSTOM HOUSE, WALL STREET, NEW YORK, 1831.

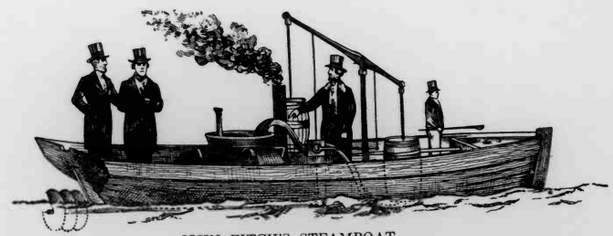
Wall Street, from near the corner of Broad Street, including the Custom House to Trinity Church. On the north, at the Nassau Street corner, is the First Presbyterian Church. A very rare view. Drawn by C. Burton. Engraved by Hatch & Smillie. Published by G. Melksham Bourne, Broadway, New York. (Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)

ure. Tugs were seldom used in leaving or making harbor until after 1835, and long afterwards captains took pride in dispensing with their services and in sailing their ships right up to their berths.

Famous Packets

One of the favorite transatlantic packets was the *Patrick Henry*, 1,000 tons, owned by Grinnell, Minturn & Co. and commanded by Captain John C. Delano, of New Bedford. She was a remarkably fine sailer, and made more money than any other ship belonging to her owners. Another famous ship was the *Dreadnought*, in command of the equally famous Captain Samuel Samuels. On her first voyage from Liverpool she reached Sandy Hook just as the Cunard steamer *Canada*, which left Liverpool a day ahead of her, reached Boston. In 1856 she made a record from New York to Liverpool in fourteen days, eight hours. Three years later she broke her own record with a passage of thirteen days, eight hours. In 1860 she sailed from Sandy Hook to Queenstown, 2,760 miles, in nine days, seventeen hours,—a record never equalled before or since. "She was on the rim of a cyclone most of the time," Captain Samuels explained. Sailors of the day called her "the wild boat of the Atlantic," and a song was written about her that became a famous chanty,—"Bound Away in the *Dreadnought*."

The completion of the Erie Canal boomed the business of the packet



JOHN FITCH'S STEAMBOAT.

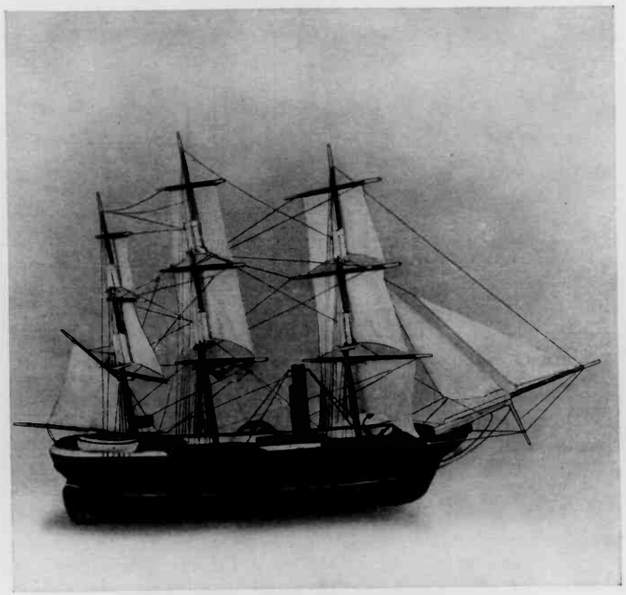
Fitch made the trial of the steamboat with a screw propeller on the Collect Pond, where the Tombs now stands, in New York City, in the summer of 1795. In 1787 he had successfully run the *Perseverance* at the rate of seven miles an hour on the Delaware, several years before Robert Fulton tried out his boat on the Seine River. Fitch's boat was a long-boat or yawl, about eighteen feet long and five feet beam, with square stern and round bows with seats, and was steered by an oar at the bow and went about six miles an hour. Fitch took with him as passengers Robert Fulton and Robert R. Livingston, and was aided in running the boat by a boy, John Hutchings, all of whom are represented in the above picture. The State of New York granted Fitch a patent for his invention, but he later abandoned the boat with part of its machinery, leaving it to decay on the shore of the pond, and to be carried away in pieces by children for fuel.

He was born in East Windsor, Conn., and was a farmer's boy. He was apprentice to a watchmaker, a store-keeper in Trenton, N.J., and a lieutenant in the army. Being taken prisoner by the Indians of the Northwest Territory, he became acquainted with the region and made a map of it. He became a surveyor in Kentucky, and turned to civil engineering, going to Pennsylvania, where he first experimented with a steamboat propelled by paddle-wheels on the Delaware. Later he went to England and France, but being disappointed in his hopes he worked his passage back to Boston before the mast, and returned to Connecticut. He finally went back to Kentucky, and died there in 1798. (From an old map of the Collect, printed in 1846 by John Hutchings, and in the collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)

era, and then modern commercial New York may be said to have begun. Packet lines to Boston had been started in 1818, to Charleston in 1825, and in 1832 E. K. Collins, an important figure in American shipping affairs, established lines to New Orleans and Vera Cruz.

New York begins the Development of the Steamship Trade

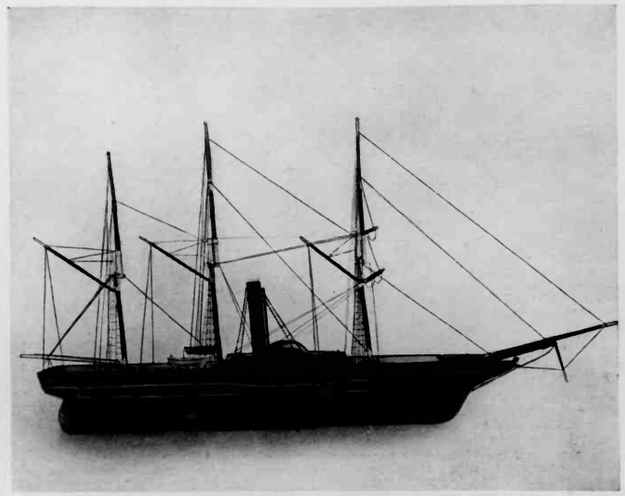
Before the dawn of the nineteenth century—about 1796—John Fitch sailed his steamboat on the pond called the Collect, which covered that part of the city where the Tombs now is. Unimportant as the event then seemed, it marked the beginning of the end of the sailing ship and the transference of the carrying trade to steam. In 1807 Robert Fulton went up the Hudson in the *Clermont*. So that New York, whose enterprise created the swiftest sailers of the day, also witnessed the perfection of the invention which was to drive the sailers from the seas; and on the Hudson the steam traffic first developed. A steamboat was, indeed, at first an alarming sight to the river's rural population, and the astonishment of the village inhabitants is expressed by one of them, who declared he had seen "the devil going to Albany in a saw-mill." Long before steam had ventured to sea, it was competing with sail for the Hudson River traffic. In 1810 there was a regular line of steam packets to Albany; tri-weekly in 1813. A line from New York to New Haven and New London was established in 1818. In 1819 the *Savannah*, a sailing vessel with auxiliary engine, crossed the Atlantic in command of Captain Moses Rogers of New York, where she had been built by Francis Fickett.



MODEL OF THE STEAM PACKET "SAVANNAH."
First steam vessel to cross the Atlantic. She sailed from Savannah, Ga., in 1819. (Collection of Commercial Museum, Philadelphia.)

Rogers had been employed by Robert Fulton and Stevens. The *Savannah*, sailing from Savannah, Ga., made the passage in twenty-seven days, eighty hours of which she ran under steam. She was the first vessel to cross the Atlantic with the help of steam. Off the coast of Ireland, she was chased for a day by a revenue cruiser, which thought she was afire. On her return she was under steam ten days out of thirty-three. She was a failure because of the large space needed for her machinery and fuel. As there was little room for cargo, her engine was eventually taken out. By 1830 there were eighty-six steamboats in New York waters.

Cornelius Vanderbilt was then garnering his fortune, running a line of steamboats from New Brunswick, N.J., to New York, and, when the monopoly of the Hudson and the Sound granted to Fulton and Livingston came to an end, he started a line of very fine boats over these waters. Between 1829 and 1848 he owned and operated fifty steamboats, most of which he built, and finally established a line of transatlantic packets superior to all competitors.



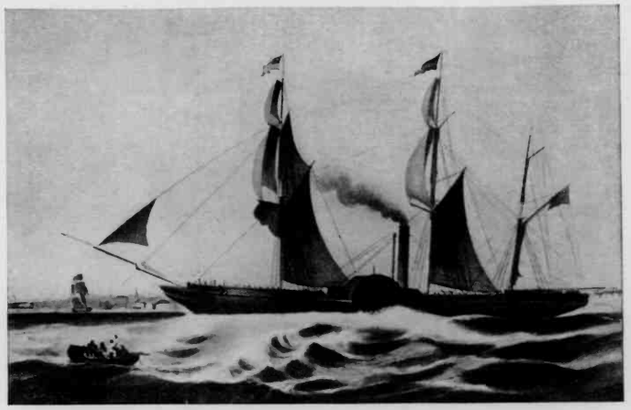
MODEL OF THE CUNARD STEAMSHIP "BRITANNIA."
One of the first steamships to cross the Atlantic. (Collection of Commercial Museum, Philadelphia.)

Prior to the Revolution shipbuilding had not been an important industry in New York, but the great demand for vessels, felt soon after 1790, forced the city into shipbuilding, and in an incredibly short time New York was one of the great shipyards of the world.

New York Shipbuilders

Among those who built ships before 1800 were Thomas Cheeseman and his son Forman, who built the 44-gun frigate *President*, launched at Corlear's Hook in 1800,—by far the largest ship built in New York up to that time. Other early shipbuilders with yards on the East River below Grand Street were Thomas Vail, William Vincent, and Samuel Ackerly. The *Oliver Ellsworth*, built by Vincent & Vail in 1804, made a passage from New York to Liverpool in fourteen days,—a remarkable record for that time and not often exceeded since.

Henry Eckford opened a shipyard in 1802 at the foot of Clinton Street. Here in 1803 he launched John Jacob Astor's famous *Beaver*, which was of 427 tons and carried a cargo of 1,100 tons. And so well built was she that after forty years' service her live-oak frame was broken up to furnish timber for another vessel. Eckford gained fame by building frigates during the War of 1812, and two of his apprentices, Isaac Webb and Stephen Smith (of Smith & Dimon), became leading shipbuilders. The first ship of Christian Bergh was the 400-ton *North American*, which was launched in 1804 for the Atlantic trade.



THE STEAMSHIP "BRITISH QUEEN" OFF THE CITY OF NEW YORK IN 1838.

This vessel was one of the early transatlantic steamships and belonged to the British and American Steam Navigation Company, and plied between New York and Liverpool. Its length was 275 feet; beam, including paddle-boxes, 64 feet; tonnage, 1,862; horse-power, 500. (Collection of J. Clarence Davies.)

He built many Atlantic packets, a Greek frigate, and the famous six-gun schooner *Antarctic* for Captain Morell. Isaac Webb, who built many of the Liverpool packets and was another great builder of this time, was born in Stamford, Conn., in 1794. His father was a ship-carpenter, and his son, William H. Webb, was perhaps the most famous of all New York shipbuilders.

Shipbuilding had become by 1830 a great industry, employing thousands of men and engaging the keenest business men of the city. Coming along the East River, one saw many fine vessels on the stocks and great piles of lumber,—white oak, hackmatack, and locust for ribs, yellow pine for keelsons and ceiling timbers, white pine for floors, live oak for "aprons."

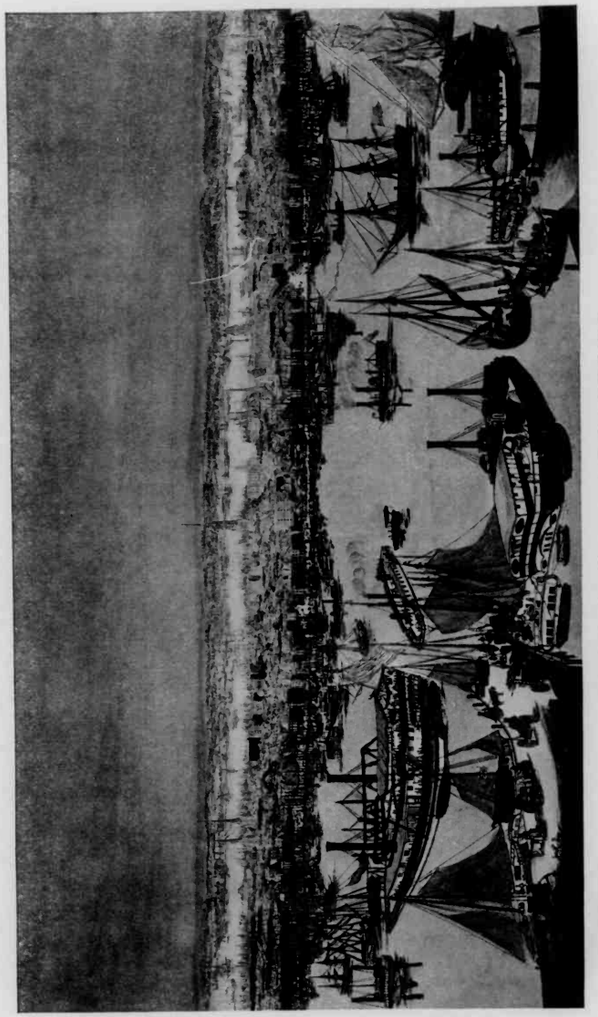
Other Leading Shipbuilders

Among other leading shipbuilders during New York's great shipbuilding era was Jacob Westervelt, who learned the "art, trade, mystery," of his profession as a common sailor and as an apprentice to Christian Bergh. While a member of Bergh's firm, he constructed most of the Havre and London packets launched before 1837. He built 247 vessels in all, and received from the Queen of Spain the order of Isabel la Catolica in recognition of models for the Spanish frigates.

Smith & Dimon

Stephen Smith with John Dimon founded the firm of Smith & Dimon, famous all over the world. Prior to 1843 they had built, among other vessels, the ship *Mary Howland*, 500 tons, whose unusual size at-

NEW YORK FROM BROOKLYN HEIGHTS, 1837.
Published by L. P. Clover, New York. Painted by J. W. Hill. Engraved by W. J. Bennett. (Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)



NEW YORK FROM BROOKLYN

Date about 1845. Drawn and engraved by T. Hornor. Printed by Wm. Meale. (Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)

tracted crowds to her launching, and the packets *Roscoe* and *Independence*. The latter, built in 1834, was 140 feet long, 1,734 tons burden, and sailed regularly for a number of years on March 6, under command of Captain Ezra Nye, carrying the President's Message. They built the Greek frigate *Liberator* and a number of North River steamboats. Dimon attended to the repairs, the most profitable end of the business, and once said, "Smith builds the ships and I make the money." From their yard came the first true clippers, the *Rainbow* and the *Sea Witch*.

Brown & Bell

Another famous firm, Brown & Bell, consisted of Daniel Brown, nephew and adopted son of Noah Brown (of Noah & Adam Brown), and Jacob Bell, who built many Liverpool packets, among them the *Liverpool*, 1,174 tons, and the *Queen of the West*, 1,168 tons. The firm built both sail and steam vessels. Brown received a ring from the Empress of Russia in return for the loan of some ship drawings.

James R. & George Steers made a great reputation by building the cup defender *America*, though this was but a small part of the work done by them. The first ship railway built in America was constructed by their father and his partner. In return for their enterprise the legislature granted the ship railway company a charter for a bank to last "as long as grass grows and water runs." Thus was founded the Dry Dock Bank, now the Eleventh Ward Bank,—the only other bank ever receiving such a charter being the Bank of the Manhattan Company.

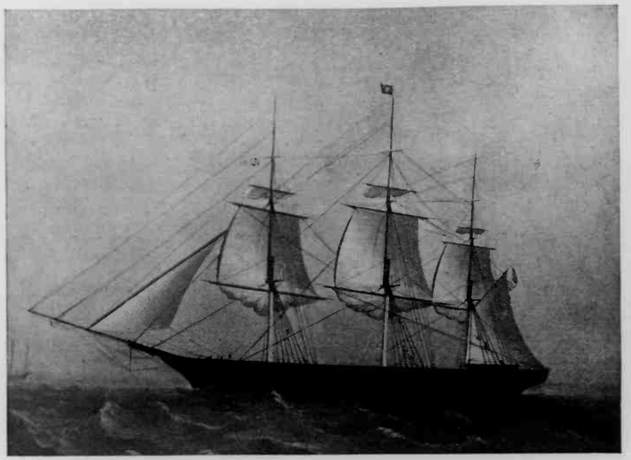
William H. Webb

The most widely known of New York's shipbuilders was William H. Webb, who learned his profession as a common apprentice in his father's yard. He launched a larger aggregate of tonnage than any other builder and had great success with warships. He built for the Italian navy, and constructed the wonderful steam ram *Dunderberg*, which he sold to France. He also built the first steamer to enter the Golden Gate, but his name is more closely associated with the beautiful fleet of clipper ships built in his yard between 5th and 7th Streets.

The Clipper Ship Era

The rise of the shipbuilding industry was due to the great expansion in the world's commerce which followed the close of the wars at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The commerce which England and America had long been cultivating in the Far East waxed mightily; and, as it grew, the demand for stanch, fast, and easily managed ships increased until American shipyards, which were easily leading the world, could not keep up with their orders. Some yards launched three great ships at a time. During 1832 the registered and enrolled tonnage of New York was greater than that of Liverpool or any city in the world except London. There might be seen 500 vessels at anchor in the harbor any day of the year. When China in 1843 opened four more of her ports to commerce, the tea trade became very important. Between July, 1845, and July, 1846, forty-one vessels arrived in New York from China, and probably as many more in other Atlantic ports. The value of the tea imported into New York from 1847 to 1853 was more than $8,000,000. After the repeal of the British Navigation Laws in 1849 gained for American ships a share of the British tea trade,

STEAMER "BALTIC" OF THE COLLINS LINE.
One of the early American passenger steamers to England; built in 1850 in New York City; 2,004 tons, 283 feet long, 45 feet beam, 32 feet deep and draft 20 feet. Converted into a sailing vessel February, 1869. Broken up in 1870 at San Francisco, Cal. (Collection of Chamber of Commerce, New York.)

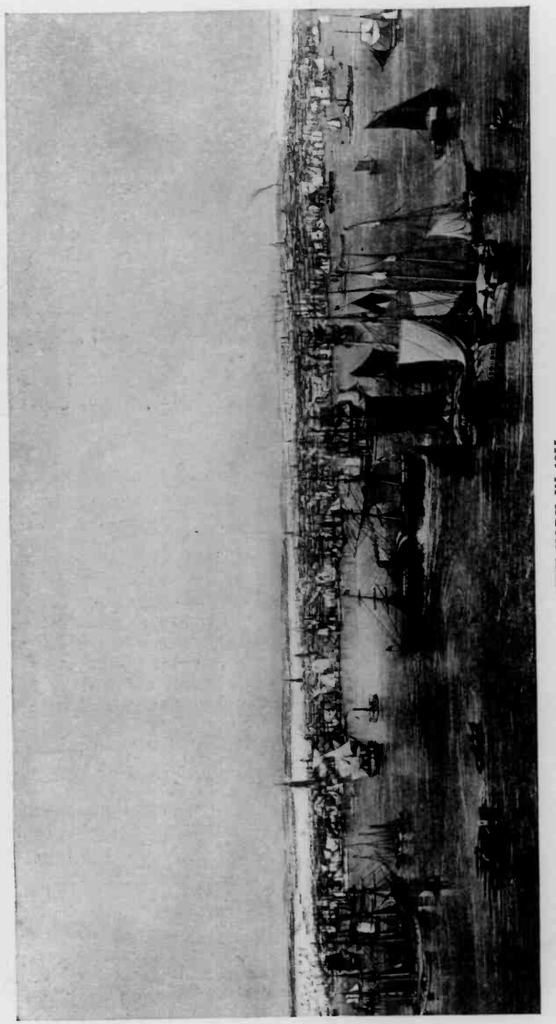


SHIP "ORIENT," EMPLOYED IN THE CHINA TRADE.
Built in New York in 1849, and the first ship to enter the River Min when it was opened to commerce in 1854. (Collection of Nantucket Public Library.)

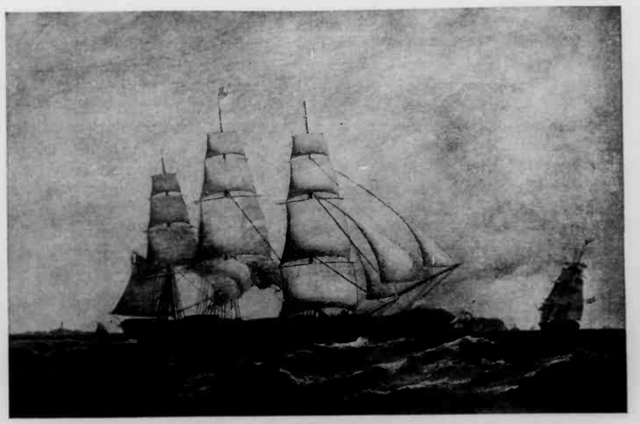
American-built ships were admitted to British registry, and between 1850 and 1857 all the largest, finest, and swiftest ships owned and chartered in England were American-built. In the tea trade swift vessels had an important advantage in the delivery of a cargo which would sell at high prices. As the trade grew, the shipbuilders of New York and Boston strove to produce fast ships, and so the famous American clipper ship was evolved. Some fast ships had been built which approached the clipper line before the clipper era, but the first real clipper with the long hollow water line and the sharpening of the forward body and of the stern was the *Rainbow*, built by Smith & Dimon in 1844 for Howland & Aspinwall, a New York firm of China merchants. She went to China and back in six months and fourteen days, including two weeks in port, and proved so profitable that her owners immediately ordered another clipper from the same firm. In 1848 the *Rainbow* was lost off Valparaiso.

The Sea Witch and Other Clippers

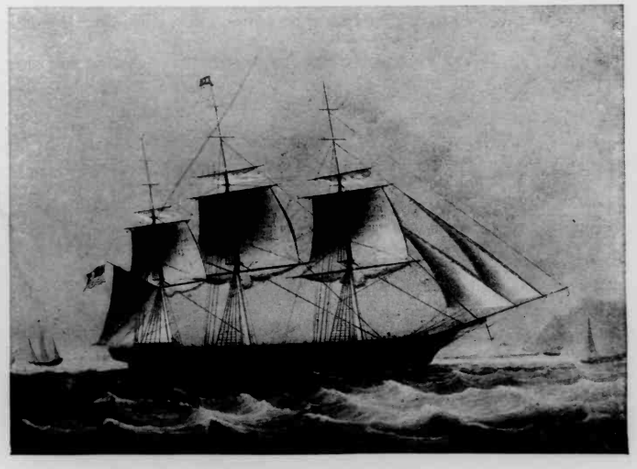
The new vessel, the *Sea Witch*, with the low free-board and raking masts of the Baltimore clipper, was very beautiful. She was painted black with a gilt stripe, and had a huge Chinese dragon as a figure-head. Her length was 170 feet, and her burden 890 tons. Her reputation of being the fastest ship on the sea during the first three years of her existence was well earned, for her best 24-hour run was 358 miles, much faster than that of any steamship of the period. She was engaged



NEW YORK IN 1855.
Published by F. & G. W. Smith, 59 Beekman Street. Painted by J. W. Hill. (Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)



THE PACKET "INDEPENDENCE."
Built in 1834 by Smith & Dimon. Under command of Captain Ezra Nye, she regularly sailed on March 6, carrying the President's Message.
(Courtesy of Mrs. Neilson Abeel.)



THE "SAMUEL RUSSELL."
(Collection of Nantucket Public Library.)

in the tea trade for ten years, stopping at San Francisco, and was finally wrecked off the coast of Cuba while bringing coolies from Amoy to Havana. The *Samuel Russell*, 940 tons, was built in 1847 by Brown & Bell for A. A. Low & Brother and was named for the eminent merchant, founder of the house of Russell & Co. in China, with whom the Low brothers began their business career. The first American ship to enter the British tea trade after the repeal of the British Navigation Laws was the *Oriental*, which was built in 1849 for A. A. Low & Brother by Jacob Bell. When she went to Hong-Kong on her second voyage in 1850, she was at once chartered for London through Russell & Co. at £6 per ton of forty cubic feet, while British vessels were waiting for cargoes at £3 10*s*. per ton of fifty cubic feet. She sailed August 28, beat down the China Sea against a strong southwest monsoon, yet arrived off the Lizard ninety-one days out, and was moored at the West India Docks in ninety-seven days from Hong-Kong,—a passage never equalled under sail before and rarely surpassed since. She delivered 1,600 tons of tea, earning $48,000 for freight from Hong-Kong. Her first cost, ready for sea, was $70,000. Her arrival caused great excitement and apprehension in England, and the Admiralty got permission to take off her lines when in dry dock.

California Clippers

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 gave shipbuilding, particularly the building of clippers, a great boom, for much depended upon the celerity with which a cargo was delivered in California. Prices would rise or fall overnight, and at first, until supplies were abundant, the cost of commodities soared. Those ships, therefore, that could most promptly deliver cargoes earned, naturally, for the shippers the greatest profits. Ships which cost from $70,000 to $80,000, often paid for themselves on their first voyage. Nor is this surprising when one learns that flour at first sold in San Francisco for $44 a barrel.

In the year 1849 775 vessels cleared from Atlantic ports for San Francisco, 214 from New York. 91,405 passengers arrived in San Francisco that year, and all had to be fed and clothed by the East, as they produced nothing but gold. The freight rates earned seem incredible to-day. In 1850 the *Samuel Russell* received $1.50 per cubic foot,—$60 per ton. She could carry probably 1,200 tons, amounting to $72,000, a little more than her first cost when ready for sea. As more ships were built, rates declined to $50, then $40, where they remained for long. To-day they are, by way of Cape Horn, $7 to $8 per ton, charged, however, by the hundredweight.

In the year 1850 60,000 tons of shipping were launched in New York, and 30,000 tons more were still under construction at the end of the year. 10,000 workmen were kept busy. The total tonnage built in the United States for that year was 306,034 tons.

During the California clipper period, 1850 to 1860, one hundred and sixty clippers were built, mostly in the first four years, in or near New York and Boston. In 1850 thirteen California clippers were launched, of which eight were built or owned in New York.

CLIPPER SHIP "COMET" OF NEW YORK.
In a hurricane off Bermuda on her voyage from New York to San Francisco, October, 1852. Built by William H. Webb in 1851, for Bucklin & Crane, and commanded by Captain E. C. Gardner. (Collection of Boston Marine Society.)

Clipper Races

The keen rivalry between clippers led to races over thousands of miles of seas; and upon the result thousands of dollars were often wagered. A race in 1850, between the *Houqua* and the *Samuel Russell*, *Memnon*, and *Sea Witch*,—old rivals in the China trade,—and the new clippers *Celestial*, *Mandarin*, and *Race Horse* (the latter of Boston) was arranged round Cape Horn. Stakes were large, and every ship had its backers. The *Samuel Russell*, arriving in San Francisco one hundred and nine days from New York, reduced the record by eleven days, and every one supposed she was the winner until the *Sea Witch* came in ninety-seven days from Sandy Hook, cutting the record by twelve days more. This was especially remarkable in that it was midwinter in the Antarctic when she rounded Cape Horn.

The Surprise and the Challenge

The *Surprise*, built in 1850 for A. A. Low & Brother, was one of the most profitable and in every way successful clippers ever built. When she was towed round to New York by Boston's historic tugboat, the *R. B. Forbes*, she was pronounced the most beautiful ship ever seen in port. She beat W. H. Aspinwall's *Sea Witch's* record of ninety-seven days to San Francisco by one day. She soon left San Francisco for London via Canton, and, when she reached London, her freight receipts had entirely paid her cost and running expenses besides netting her owners $50,000. She made eleven consecutive passages from China to New York in eighty-nine days or less, six from Hong-Kong, five from Shanghai,—the best, eighty-one days from Shanghai in 1857. The carrying capacity of the swift clippers proved to be too slight to pay well, and lightness of build made them easily strained, so the later clippers were made larger. In 1851 there were thirty-one California clippers launched. Among these was the *Challenge*, 2,006 tons, built by William H. Webb for N. L. & G. Griswold, the largest ship yet built in New York. Her sail plan was enormous: she carried 12,780 yards of canvas, and, when lying at the foot of Pine Street, her bowsprit at high tide reached over the roofs of the stores. She was painted black with a gold stripe, and was one of the most expensive wooden vessels ever built in America. Her captain was Robert H. Waterman, under whom she made some fast runs; and, when in London, she was so much admired that her lines were taken off by the Admiralty.

The Comet and the Sword-fish

The *Comet*, 1,209 tons, was also built by Webb in 1851. She was owned by Bucklin & Crane, and commanded by Captain Gardner. The *Comet* was remarkable for speed, sea-worthiness, and good fortune. She made the round trip to San Francisco in seven months, nine days; the return trip in seventy-six days,—the shortest on record. The third of the famous clippers built by Webb in this year was the *Sword-fish*, 1,150 tons, owned by Barclay & Livingston. She was generally considered Webb's masterpiece. On her first passage out to San Francisco a race was arranged for large stakes between her and the *Flying-fish*, a Boston record-breaker, built by the great designer, Donald McKay. The *Sword-fish* won, making the trip in ninety-two days,—the second best record ever made,—her rival taking ninety-eight days.

N. B. Palmer

Another clipper built in 1851 was the *N. B. Palmer*, named for the celebrated Captain Palmer, and launched at Jacob Westervelt's yard. In China she was known as the "yacht" on account of her smart appearance. Her captain, Charles Porter Low, a rich man and younger brother to the owners, with his wife, made his home upon her, and gave elaborate entertainments, especially in China. After a few voyages to California she kept entirely to the tea trade.

The Flying Cloud

The most notable of all the California clippers was the *Flying Cloud*, built by Donald McKay of Boston, but owned by the New York firm of Grinnell, Minturn & Co. Her length over all was 225 feet, tonnage 1,783 tons, and she was commanded by Captain Josiah Cressy, of Marblehead. She made the passage from New York to San Francisco in eighty-nine days, a passage never surpassed and only twice equalled,—once by herself, and once by the *Andrew Jackson* in 1860. In this passage she made her famous run of 374 miles while steering to the northward and westward under topgallant sails after rounding Cape Horn. This was the fastest day's run under steam or sail up to that time, exceeding by 42 miles the best run then made by an Atlantic steamship. This triumph caused the greatest excitement throughout the country. Her owners had her log printed in gold on white silk for distribution among their friends.

The Sovereign of the Seas

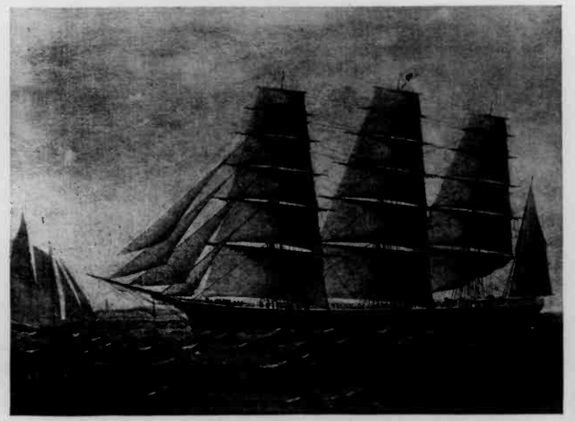
Another fast New York clipper, also owned by Grinnell, Minturn & Co., and built by Donald McKay of Boston, was the *Sovereign of the Seas*, 2,421 tons, launched June, 1852. This very beautiful and powerful vessel, commanded by Captain Lauchlan McKay, brother of Donald McKay, left New York for San Francisco in August, 1852, with freight for which she would receive $84,000,—flour then being worth $44 a barrel in San Francisco. Discharging her cargo, she went to Honolulu and loaded with oil for New York, reaching there in eighty-two days,—a passage never equalled. For 10,000 miles she sailed without tacking or wearing, and in ten consecutive days made 3,300 miles. Later she sailed from New York to Liverpool in thirteen days, nineteen hours, the passage from the Grand Banks to Liverpool taking five and a half days.

Great Republic

The largest of all the clipper ships was the *Great Republic*, which was built by Donald McKay, her first owner, at Boston, and later bought by A. A. Low & Brother, of New York. She was 325 feet long, 53 feet beam, 38 feet deep, of 4,555 tons burden. She had, when launched, four decks and four masts, and carried a crew of 100 men and 30 boys. She carried 15,653 yards of sail, and used in building 1,500,000 feet of hard pine, 986,000 feet of white oak, 336 tons of iron bolts, and 56 tons of copper. She was burned during a fire at New York, December 26, 1853, and was rebuilt so that her tonnage was reduced to 3,357 and her decks to three. She made a passage to San Francisco in ninety-two days. She went under the English flag, and made a voyage from St. John to Liverpool in fourteen days. In 1872 she sprang a leak, and was abandoned at sea.

CLIPPER SHIP "DREADNOUGHT," OFF TUSKAR LIGHT.

12½ days from New York on her celebrated passage into dock at Liverpool in 13 days 11 hours, December, 1854. Built at Newburyport in 1853 by Currier & Townsend for David Ogden & Co., of New York. Made the passage from Sandy Hook to Queenstown in 9 days and 17 hours, under Captain Samuel Samuels. Length, 200 feet; tonnage, 1,413. (Collection of Boston Marine Society.)



"GREAT REPUBLIC."

The largest of all clipper ships, built by Donald McKay, who first owned her, in 1853. Afterwards bought by A. A. Low & Brother, of New York. 325 feet long, 53 feet beam, 38 feet deep, and of 4,555 tons burden. December 26, 1853, a great conflagration in New York set fire to her, and she was burned to the water's edge. She was later rebuilt and made the record time from New York to the equator of 15 days, 18 hours, Cape Horn in 48 days, and San Francisco in 92 days. (Collection of Arthur Williams, Jr.)

Shipping Merchants of the Sail Era

A list of those interested in shipping during the first half of the century would include the name of almost every merchant of consequence in New York at the time. In the early part of the century the city experienced what has been called the New England invasion, when there came from New England a surprising number of those who later became New York's leading shipping merchants. Their success was due largely to the valuable experience they gained while in the employ of New England merchants and capitalists, who in the early days owned most of the shipping of the country.

Jonathan Goodhue

Among the New Englanders who had successful careers in New York was Jonathan Goodhue, who was brought up in the counting-room of Hon. John Norris, one of the most wealthy and enterprising of Salem merchants. For him Goodhue served as supercargo on a voyage to the Red Sea; and later, when he started business in New York, he retained Mr. Norris's patronage and enjoyed a large part of the business of Joseph Peabody of Salem and Hon. William Gray of Boston, both eminent ship-owners. With Pelatiah Perit he formed the firm of Goodhue & Co., and for many years did a very large commission business. Many clerks of the firm went out to St. Petersburg, Calcutta, Canton, or London, started business, and opened relations with Goodhue & Co. The firm for many years was agent for the Black Ball Line of Liverpool packets.

Moses H. Grinnell

Moses H. Grinnell, born in New Bedford in 1803, was a typical New York shipping merchant. When under twenty years of age, he went to Rio de Janeiro as supercargo, sold his goods profitably, took a cargo of coffee to Trieste, sold it, then left his ship for a business trip through Europe. On his return he settled in New York, and became a partner in the great shipping house, Grinnell, Minturn & Co., soon known all over the world. This firm probably built more ships than any other American firm,—it had two great packet lines, one to London, one to Liverpool,—and much of its success was due to the enterprise and courage of Moses H. Grinnell.

N. L. & G. Griswold

One of the most famous China houses was that of N. L. & G. Griswold (nicknamed No Loss and Great Gain Griswold). The Griswolds came from Old Lyme, Conn., in 1794, when just of age, and entered the West India trade, shipping flour and importing rum and sugar. They entered the China trade, and there was probably not a grocery store in the country in which tea packages marked "Ship Panama N. L. & G. G." were not a staple article. The firm had three vessels in turn named *Panama*. Many men afterwards famous merchants went to Canton as supercargoes for this firm, among whom were John N. A. Griswold and John C. Green of Russell & Co.

In those days the duty on tea was enormous, twice its cost in Canton; but the government did not insist on the payment of duties for nine, twelve, or eighteen months, giving merchants time to sell their cargo and make another venture with the proceeds before paying the duty. John Jacob Astor had several vessels operating this way, so that for from eighteen to twenty years he had what was virtually an interest-

free loan from the government of $5,000,000. He was prudent and lucky, and so large a government loan did not ruin him, as it did many others.

One of the most prominent tea houses was Thomas H. Smith & Sons, who, starting out with a few thousands, imported teas so heavily that, when they failed, they owed the government $3,000,000, not a cent of which was ever paid. This failure upset the tea business for five years, and involved almost every one so engaged. The firm had an enormous tea store on South Street at Dover Street, which extended through to Water Street and was one hundred feet wide. It was one of the sights of the city when built.

Howland & Aspinwall

The firm of G. G. & S. S. Howland, afterwards Howland & Aspinwall, did an enormous shipping business, especially on the Pacific coast, though they were also interested in trade with the East and West Indies, England, and the Mediterranean. They owned several Liverpool packets,—at least seventeen or eighteen vessels in all. They did an extensive business with Venezuela, and to the Pacific sent cargoes valued as high as $250,000. These cargoes consisted of all kinds of small wares, dry goods, ironware, steel, provisions, gunpowder, muskets, Chinese shawls,—in fact the stock of a country store.

W. H. Aspinwall left the active management of the affairs of Howland & Aspinwall in 1850–1851 to go into the Pacific Railroad and Steamship Company. He founded the city of Aspinwall, and eventually gained great wealth through operations in California.

A. A. Low & Brother

One of the last of the old-time New York merchants was A. A. Low, son of Seth Low of Gloucester, Mass. He started out as clerk for a Salem merchant who traded with South America. In 1833 he went to Canton as clerk for Russell & Co., the largest American house in China. In four years he was admitted to the firm, and remained with it three years. He then returned to New York and began his own business, which became the great house of A. A. Low & Brother. He immediately started on a large scale, built many vessels and added to his great fleet by buying others. He was uniformly successful, and never lost a ship until the *Alabama* began her depredations. Then two were burned. In 1860, when trade was opened with Japan, Mr. Low was one of the first to enter it. The firm included his younger brother, Josiah B., and his brother-in-law, Edward H. R. Lyman, and they occupied a counting house on Burling Slip. At this period most of the leading shippers were depositors with the Bank of the Manhattan Company.

Conclusion

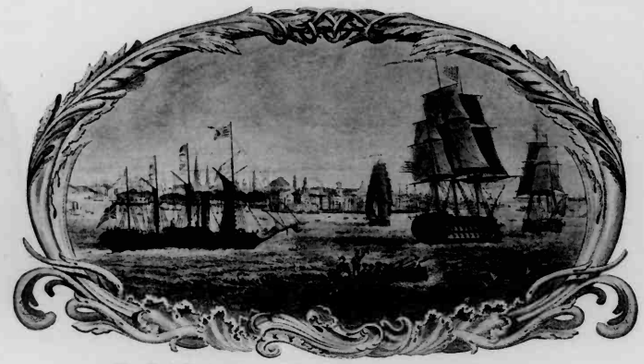
The year 1853 marked the height not alone of clipper shipbuilding, but also the high tide of the American deep-sea merchant marine. Forty-eight clippers were added to the California fleet that year, and more the following years. Clippers had captivated the imagination of the public, and every one with money to invest wanted to put it into one. For a while the discovery of gold in Australia helped to keep this great fleet busy. R. W. Cameron had a line from New York to Melbourne which employed eight or ten of the finest ones, and a number of them were chartered in England to run from there to Australia.

During the Crimean War they were used to transport troops, but, when the financial depression of 1857 came, it was evident that shipbuilding had been overdone. The California freight rate fell to $10 a ton, and American vessels lay idle for months in Manila Bay, Hong-Kong, Foochow, Shanghai, and Calcutta.

Americans made the mistake, moreover, of continuing to build wooden sailing vessels after the era of steam and iron had arrived. In the decade between 1850 and 1860 the proportion of ocean freight carried by steam had risen from 14 per cent. to 28 per cent. So far as we then knew, we had no great deposits of iron and coal, and we believed England had the advantage. Had it not been for the Civil War, we should perhaps have adjusted ourselves to changed conditions; but the *Alabama* and other Southern cruisers virtually drove our flag from the sea.

Internal progress, too, attracted more and more the attention of the far-sighted, shrewd, capable business men of America. Intercommunication was made easier by the coming of the railroad and the telegraph, so that it was more profitable to engage in manufacturing and internal distribution. The carrying trade fell into other hands, particularly England's, and at the close of the Civil War our oversea merchant marine had practically disappeared from the seas. Many of the old merchants had entered other and more profitable lines of industry, and the few who remained in the shipping industry were content to use foreign bottoms.

And here we leave the story of the ships and shipping of old New York, which we have briefly sketched. We have seen the rise, culmination, and decadence of the city's oversea trade; and to-day we look toward the dawn of a new era which promises much for the re-establishment of the American merchant marine and for the securing again of our share of the foreign trade of the world.



New York Harbor about 1849. (Collection of Percy R. Pyne, 2d.)

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THE author desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to the following authorities which have been used in the preparation of this brochure:—

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